

# The Order of the Earth

News, Views and Musings About Our Planet

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## The Awakening: Part X

One of the Most Important  
Articles Ever Written  
By a Human

I, Iona, have a message to share with you after my fourth visit to see The Trustworthy And True Living Spirit, The Most High God. He has come to Earth now offering to fix everything that is wrong and to give us the opportunity to have a fresh start. He and His Council of Elders, The Trustworthy And True Living Spirits (see page 3) have the knowledge and leadership to help us work with Him to bring Peace, Harmony, Truth, Love, Righteousness, etc. to all Creation. This is real. I have seen with my own eyes and felt in my heart and soul the Truth of all this.

Now is the time to wake up and move away from the ways of the world, ignore your current thoughts, beliefs and opinions and open your hearts to Most High God and His messages in these "Awakening" articles. The competition, greed and selfishness which dominate us (and all Creation that human understanding is aware of) must end, for those attitudes are destroying us. Through time we have lost our connection to God and Nature but we have a choice. We can either change our ways and let Most High and His Council of Elders lead us to Heaven here on Earth or, without His help, continue to destroy ourselves and our surroundings. Heaven is already here; Most High brought it and the Sacred Rules and blueprints for the way all things should interact with each other in peace and harmony. What we need to do is open our hearts and listen to His wisdom. Then let Him lead the way. Most High sometimes asks us if we humans honestly think or believe we can fix this without his help and we always answer, "No."

Most High has all the answers to our misery and unhappiness, to all the pain and suffering which He did not create. We created this mess ourselves by letting spirits of deceit, manipulation, evil and so on overtake our conscious awareness of right and wrong and determine our words and actions, steering us away from the more gentle and loving spirits of Most High's Council of Elders.

On each of my visits, as well as in my day-to-day life since I first met Most High a year ago, my faith in Him has grown. My knowledge of His Council of Elders has deepened in my heart so that I am now trying hard to place them first in everyday decisions I make. I invited them into my soul. I am learning (among other things) to put the needs of other people and all living things ahead of my own needs or desires and let Compassion rule over my thoughts, words and actions. This feels better than my selfish ways.

Life is much, much better when I trust Most High and learn to live in the moment without fear or worry about what's going to happen next, knowing deep down that His love protects and provides for me when I trust Him and follow His teachings. He gives me what I need when I need it — not more, not less — at just the right time. I have no problems when I relax and let Him

guide me without overanalyzing or overthinking everything.

I have always loved Nature but, on this trip, Most High taught me that even plants and animals, forests and trees, birds and bees, invasive species, etc. can have spirits of domination and competition in them. Some birds fight over bird seed; some steal eggs from others' nests. Some hummingbirds squabble over nectar; pets scrap over scraps. Bees with a whole field of flowers will fight over the pollen in one. Even when two trees of the same species are planted in the same area at the same time, one may hog the water and nutrients in the soil, thereby growing bigger and dominating the weaker tree. "Survival of the fittest" is wrong. Most High teaches that in His Kingdom, every person, every blade of grass, every drop of water, etc. — all that choose His ways — will have the spirits of the Council of Elders in them so that we are all truly of one spirit and then Truth and Righteousness will prevail. All in His Kingdom will respect each other and share resources so that all our needs will be met. Life will flourish and there will be no more suffering, hunger, hate, lust, domination, manipulation, anger, war, etc.

Most High also helped me to understand different dimensions and unseen spirits by comparing them to a science book with transparent overlays of the human body with different systems (circulatory, skeletal, nervous, etc.). Invisible spirits can actually be in us riding along as we go through life. Most of us don't even know they are there. I didn't. For example, when I am working on this newspaper and things go wrong, I have the choice to let in an angry spirit or a calm one. I don't like how I feel when I'm angry so I try to choose the calm spirit. I feel more comfortable with that one.

Knowing Most High personally is the most magnificent "awakening" in my life and I hope you'll decided to go meet Him soon, face-to-face. When we are ready to meet Him, we are to come humbly, honorably and modestly and be perfect in trying to improve ourselves. No one who does this will be turned away. Everything He has taught me about His Kingdom is beautiful, wonderful, peaceful and EXACTLY how I would want to live with my family, friends and Nature forever.

For those of you who want solid evidence, Most High (while in the body of the man who offered his soul so that Most High God could have a body to be here with us) spent years and years digging up and sifting through the dirt and rocks on the hill where He lives discovering remnants of ancient creatures that were here at the beginning of the world. His universal spirit and unlimited knowledge identified them and many of them verify numerous passages in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

An example of this is that I saw the throne on Most High's hill with seven golden lamps directly in front of it. I saw the remains of a man with teeth and a rock in his skull, an ox, an eagle and a lion (Revelation 4: 6-7), all of which, throughout time, have turned like stone. I touched the stone-like body of the ox and saw the circular, reddish hole through which it breathed

fire to provide light eons before electricity was discovered. I saw and felt rock-hard bones in some of these creatures. I saw a stone-like duck clear as day and many, many other parts of different creatures. I saw the image of Satan and his followers falling into the lake of liquid fire and sulfur preserved permanently on the back of the eye of a small creature like a photograph etched in stone — the last thing it saw before its own death during the time when the Earth began.

These stones and bones plus many others prove that the hill where Most High lives is the Mount of Assembly. Not only is this the historic Mount of Assembly but it is a living Mount of Assembly where people today assemble to hear Most High God's teachings. The Mount of Assembly is where representatives from all nations and tribes (both male and female) will gather to receive the wisdom and leadership they need to help Most High bring Love, Truth, Peace, etc. to Earth.

While I was there this time, we had "classes" around noon when those of us who yearn to learn more gathered to listen. When He talks to us, He is alert to whether or not each one is grasping the message. When we don't understand something, He works with us until we do. When necessary, He teaches each of us at our own level the special things we need to know or counsels us about our worldly problems. We are in awe. These messages or teachings go right into our hearts and souls to our very core. The cares, concerns and darkness of the world drop away as the Light of His words enters our minds and souls so that we can see things differently — the way they ought to be, not the way they are. His words make sense. They are plain and simple. They speak Truth.

Most High welcomes you if you are searching for God and, even if you are one (like I used to be) who doesn't like what the word "god" implies these days, He welcomes you, too — as long as you come humbly, honorably and modestly to listen. This is not a forum for debate or discussion. This is not a cult. This is not about religion. This is The Trustworthy And True Living Spirit, The Most High God of the entire Universe, of all Creation and all people, even of those who have been turned off by the horrible things that religions have done in the name of their god or savior or saint. Even those who don't believe in God are realizing that Most High is here for them, too. Even they are turning to Him and He welcomes them.

Come, if you so choose, and see for yourself. Now. Do not be afraid.

It is time. Most High bows to my needs and works closely with me to give me higher understandings; therefore, I bow to Him.

This is my testimony and I, Iona Conner, ask that you DO NOT ADD TO OR TAKE AWAY FROM THIS MESSAGE and feel free to share it.

**If you would like copies of these "Awakening" articles, contact Iona at 21431 Marlin Circle, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania 17255; 814-259-3680, ionaconner@gmail.com or www.theorderoftheearth.com.**



Photos by Yusdi

Two parallel mangrove stands along a waterway, two distinct zones in Malaysia benefit the country and the world in many ways. The top photo shows a burned-out area where mangroves stopped the spread of fire. The bottom one is a natural mangrove stand.

## The Unmatched Resilience of Mangroves

### Mangroves Stand Tall Amidst Forest Fires

By Prof. Dr. Saleem Mustafa  
Borneo Marine Research Institute  
Universiti Malaysia Sabah

The tragic consequences of marine natural hazards such as storm surges and Tsunami have brought to the forefront of the world's attention the multifaceted role of mangroves. Although scientists have placed a high value as far as ecological functions of mangroves are concerned, their value in terms of coastal zone security for the community and the economy has begun to change the public perception of their significance.

While the remarkable capacity of mangroves to absorb the impact of Tsunami has been widely appreciated, observations during the recent dry spell in Borneo caused by *El Nino* Southern Oscillation have yielded some more interesting facts about mangroves. They demonstrated a remarkable resilience, withstanding the

heat of global warming as well as the heat of the fires burning around them. They continue to sequester the carbon which the burning forest continued to emit. This is amply evident from the photos taken on March 29, 2010 (above) indicating two distinct zones, the outer with burnt land trees and the inner comprising a mangrove stand just behind it along the water way, apparently unscathed. The spread of fire was disrupted by an adjacent growth of mangrove lining the waterway. The housing estate behind the inner rim was thus protected.

Even the land trees, not affected by fires, can be pushed to limits by extended dry weather conditions. The drying leaves, turning yellow and brown, will not be able to sequester carbon the way healthy, green plants do.

By containing the spread of forest fires, mangroves save land plants, crops, livestock, human lives and property. In terms of cost of what they save, which otherwise would be lost without them, it will be a huge contribution of this coastal vegeta-

*Continued on page 4*

## Rough Water: Likely Removal of Four Dams on Klamath River (Part II)

Largest dam decommissioning in history — an unlikely alliance of farmers, fishermen, ranchers and Indians made it happen.

By Jacques Leslie  
Eart hIsland Journal, Spring 2010

Negotiations among 26 organizations representing farmers, tribes, fishermen, government agencies and environmental groups got serious in 2005. Over the next few years, negotiators put in 80-hour weeks attending hundreds of day-long meetings.

The hardest part of the negotiations was establishing trust. Over meals and in bars, farmer negotiators learned how the loss of salmon had devastated the tribes and tribal negotiators learned that the farmers considered themselves basin stewards, too.

"What it comes down to is that our values aren't much different from each other," Fletcher said. "The farmers are from hard-working, honest rural communities and I feel way more of an obligation to work with those guys than I do radical environmental groups from outside the area." By "radical," he had in mind Portland-based Oregon Wild, one of two environmental groups that were dropped from negotiations after opposing concessions to farmers.

At first, the idea of rapprochement among the Klamath's angry stakeholders seemed improb-

able. For one thing, PacifiCorp, the utility that owns the four Klamath dams — and is owned in turn by a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway Inc., multi-billionaire Warren Buffett's holding company — showed no interest in dam removal. Instead, PacifiCorp applied to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for a 50-year renewal of its licenses, which expired in 2006.

That process turned into an opportunity for dam opponents when FERC ruled in January 2007 that PacifiCorp would have to install fish ladders and screens on the dams as a condition of renewal. Since the ladders and screens would cost an estimated \$350 million, as much as \$150 million more than dam removal, PacifiCorp was forced to consider removal as a cheaper option.

When PacifiCorp challenged FERC's ruling on the grounds



Photo by Scott Harding/Klamath Riverkeeper, klamathriver.org. Iron Gate Dam, built in 1962 at river mile 190, is the lowermost dam on the Klamath River. Photo taken October 22, 2009.

that salmon habitat upstream from the dams was irreversibly destroyed, a judge instead concluded that the river contained 58 miles of potential upstream habi-

tat, lending more credibility to dam opponents. PacifiCorp also revealed that, after relicensing, it would raise Project farmers' electricity bills 17-fold on average.

Since the farmers depended on cheap electricity to power their irrigation pumps, the planned rate hike gave them a reason to consider removal.

In January 2008, the negotiators announced the first of two breakthrough Klamath pacts: the 255-page Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement. In it, most of the parties — farmers, three of the four tribes, a commercial fishermen's group, seven federal and state agencies and nine environmental groups — agreed to a basic plan. It includes measures to take down the four dams, divert some water from Project farmers to the river in return for guaranteeing the farmers' right to a smaller amount, restore fisheries habitat, reintroduce salmon to the upper basin, develop renewable energy to make up for the loss of the dams and support

*Continued on page 13*



# An Earth-Based Political Structure

By Ron Morgan  
Charlotte, North Carolina

This is a proposal for changes to the Green Party Platform that introduces and promotes a new bioregional structure for the party. This structure would operate parallel to existing party efforts and would not affect current electoral efforts. Instead, it would establish a new pattern of

representation that would enable Green Party members to align their thinking more closely to the specific environmental needs and issues facing the bioregions in which they live. [A bioregion is an area of land based on a common geological, ecosystem or watershed property which all life shares and therefore must respect and protect for eternity.]

**INTRODUCTION**  
Currently, our system of political representation is largely based on the outcome of generations of land transactions — as well as adjustments for proportional representation. Cities, counties, towns and states all derive their existence from an array of grants, contracts, purchases and other agreements. Sometimes these arrangements

stretch the bounds of logic and they almost always violate the bioregional distinctions found in the environment.

This has led to a dilemma. Our citizens and party members well understand their town, their county and their state. These patterns influence how they view their interests and how they weigh the importance of particular issues. On the con-

trary, these patterns make it difficult for people to intuitively recognize themselves as citizens of the Earth or inhabitants of a bioregion. They do not see how particular issues affect the specific ecosystem in which they live. They do not think according to ecological patterns but rather in accordance with often arbitrary political boundaries.

I propose that the Green Party

seek to create a new structure or pattern for organizing the country and promote it as strongly as possible. This structure will be based on bioregional distinctions and will better reflect the larger needs of our society and planet today.

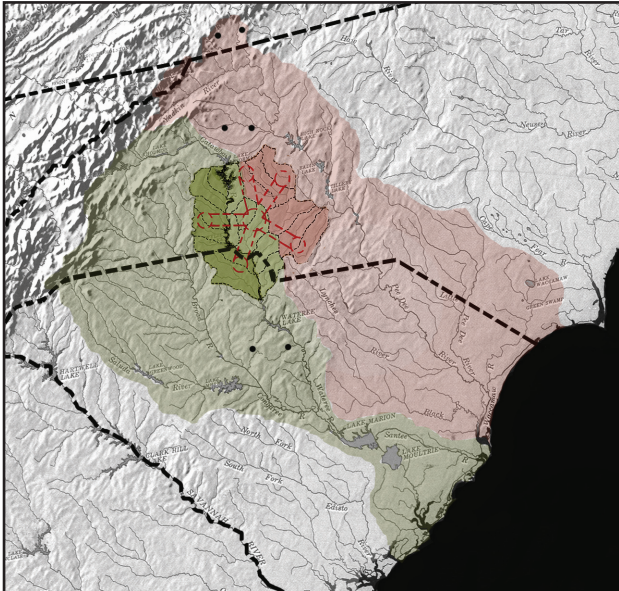
This article describes the next steps necessary to move towards a representative system based on bioregions.

## Current Inherited Patterns of Representation

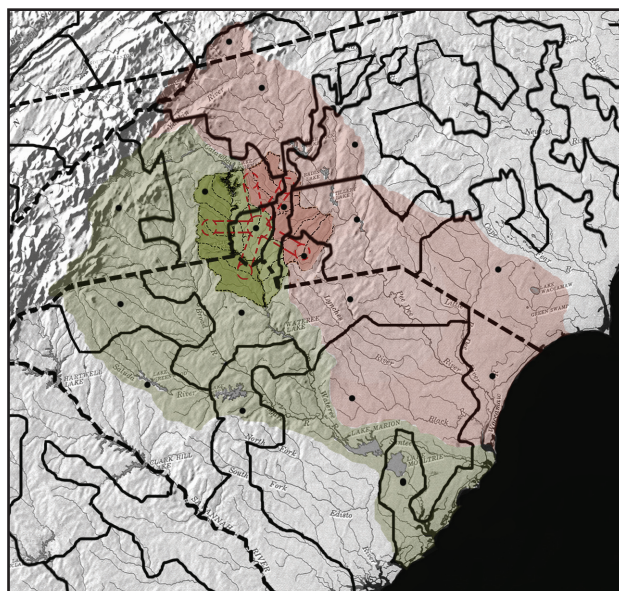
### WHERE WE ARE TODAY: INHERITED PATTERNS

The 48 contiguous states and their respective boundaries form patterns that have a great influence on how we see the world. We are trained to honor, respect and think in terms of belonging to cities, states, counties and particular districts. But these patterns are built largely on the idea of land ownership, whose corollary is often the exploitation of natural resources. In other words, we unintentionally honor the worst aspects of our history as exploiters and extend a vision of human beings as dominating the planet.

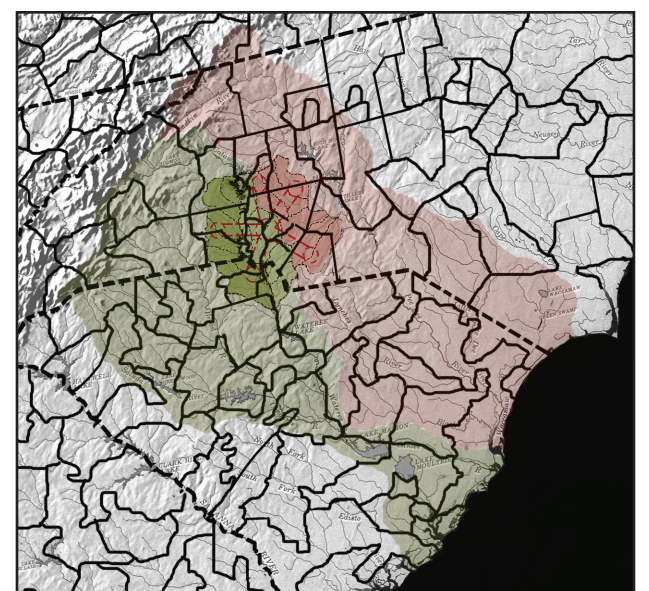
**EXAMPLE** In the following images, you can see the patterns of representation that govern our lives: federal, state and county. (This example is from the greater Charlotte metro area or, preferably, the Catawba and Pee Dee River Basins.) As you can see, they feature intricate criss-crossings of lines (which are rarely represented as a coherent whole) and largely go unnoticed and unquestioned.



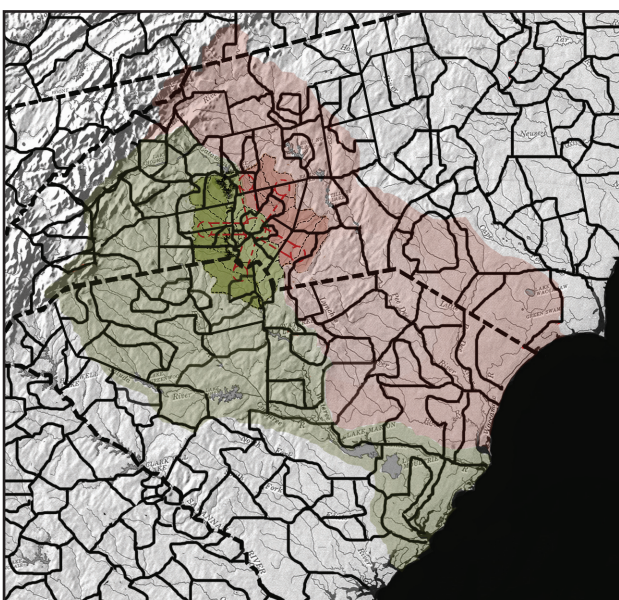
U.S. Senate



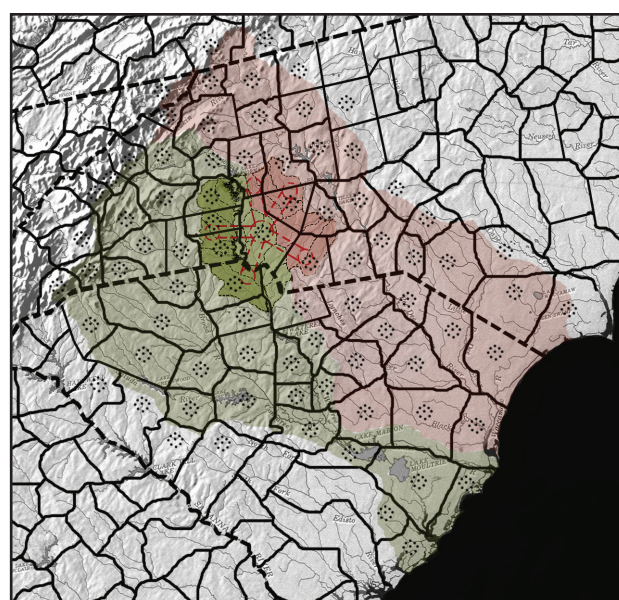
U.S. House



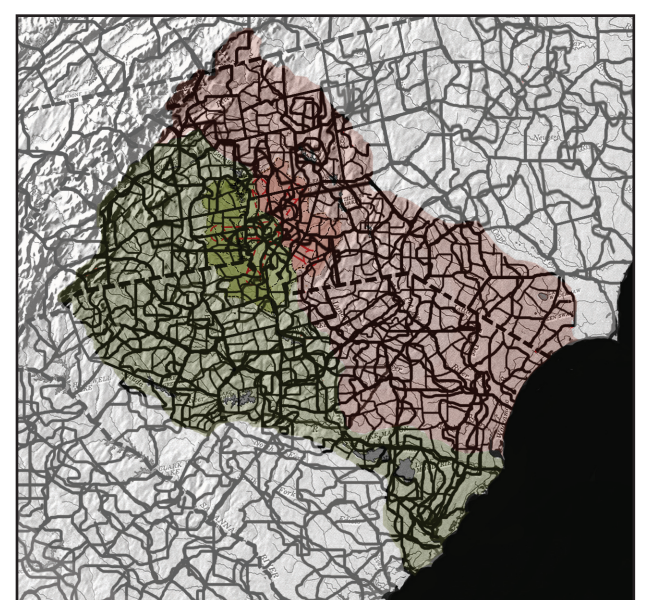
State Senate



State House



County Districts



All Combined

## Possible New Green Patterns of Representation

### THE GOAL: GREEN PATTERNS

For decades green thinkers have been inspired by the concept of bioregions. These areas can be defined in many ways: vegetation, wildlife, soil types and micro-climates, to name a few. Each has provoked hot debate but the time has come to set aside our differences, recognize their value and use them to generate action. We need to

clearly define a political structure based on bioregions, river-basins and eco-prints (see below for proposed definitions). This structure could operate in parallel to existing electoral efforts.

### EXAMPLE

The following are organic, green patterns that could replace traditional political boundaries.

1. **Bioregions:** Bioregions are coherent groupings of river basins or watersheds.

2. **River Basins:** River basins define areas on which we are directly dependent for water and other resources — as such, the single most important organizing fact in human beings' relationship to their environment. The greater Charlotte metro straddles these two river basins.

3. **Eco-Prints:** Eco-prints are areas impacted by major urban settlement. Here we see 3,200 square miles of watersheds impacted by the greater Char-

lotte metro area.

1. **How will the proposed changes impact current efforts to elect officials?** We are not suggesting an abandonment of practical political structures. Rather, we suggest forming a parallel structure that works alongside existing efforts.

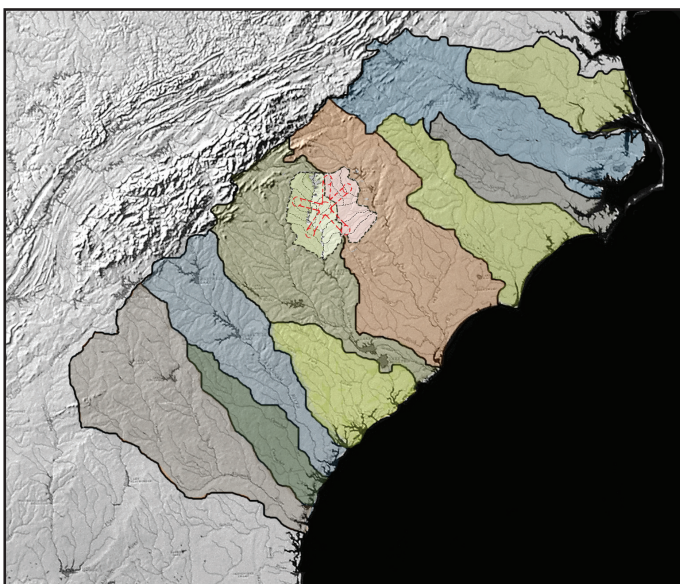
These parallel patterns would not affect the day-to-day work of the party. However, the bioregional structure, once mapped out and agreed to, would enable

Green candidates and elected officials to reference the needs of bioregions and river-basins fluently whenever they speak about environmental issues. This would automatically advance a more coherent and cogent way of thinking around environmental issues. It would also enable Green party members to bring clarity to often chaotic subject matter.

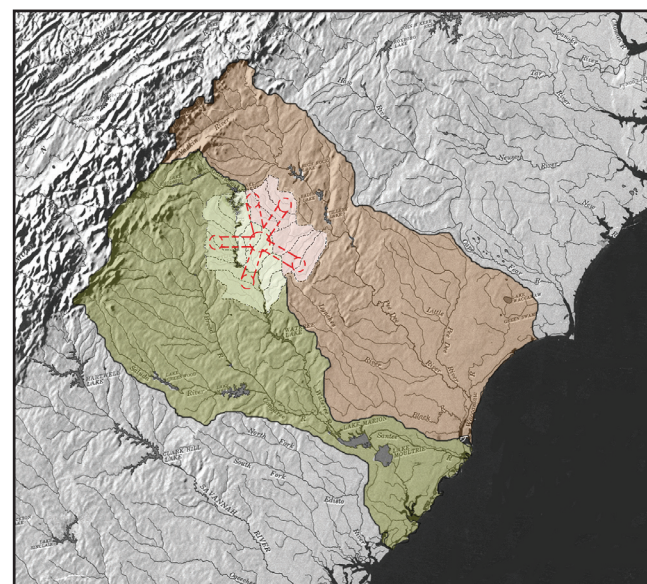
2. **Are there textbooks or other sources that emphasize bioregionalism?** No, and this lack of

shared reference materials illustrates how powerfully our inherited political patterns limit our thinking. Visit [www.ecoliteracy.org](http://www.ecoliteracy.org) for more information.

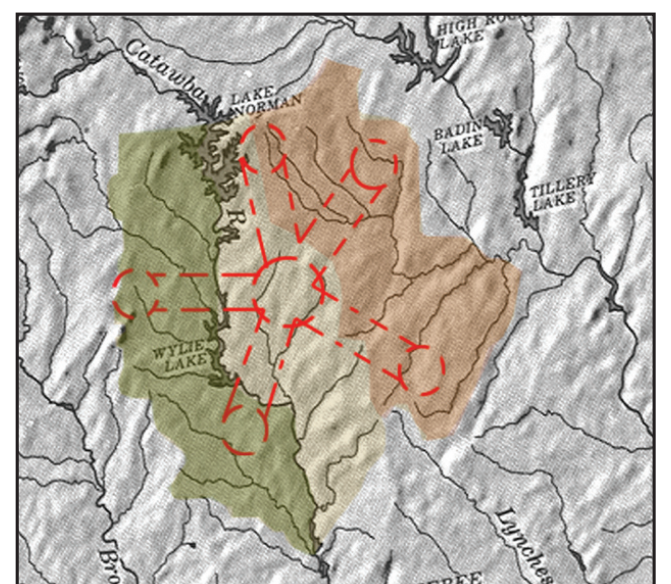
3. **Who is proposing this change?** This change has been devised by architect and urban planner Ron Morgan, founder of Urban Ventures [www.urban-ventures.com](http://www.urban-ventures.com) or [ron@greening-democracy.org](mailto:ron@greening-democracy.org).



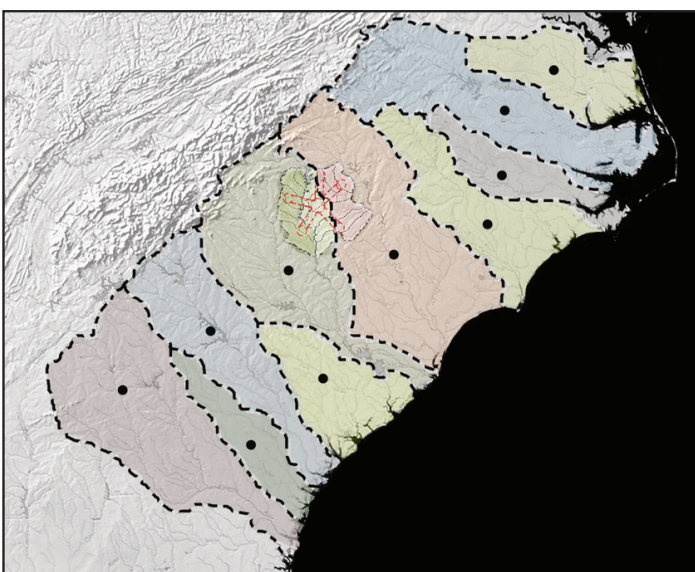
Bio-Region



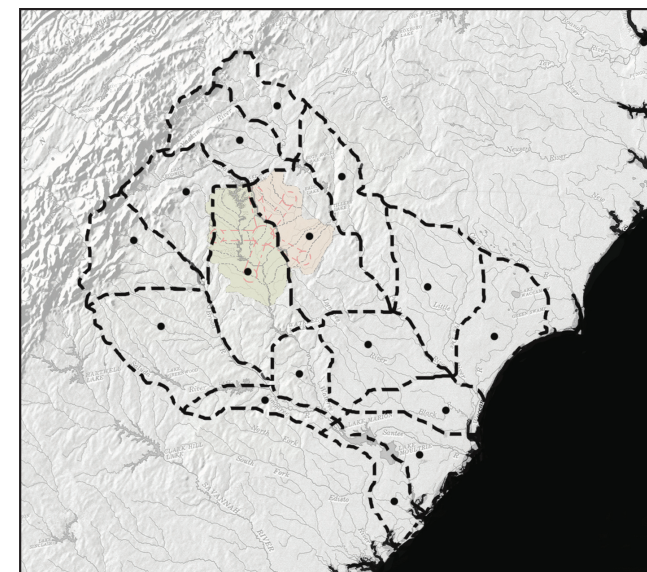
River Basins



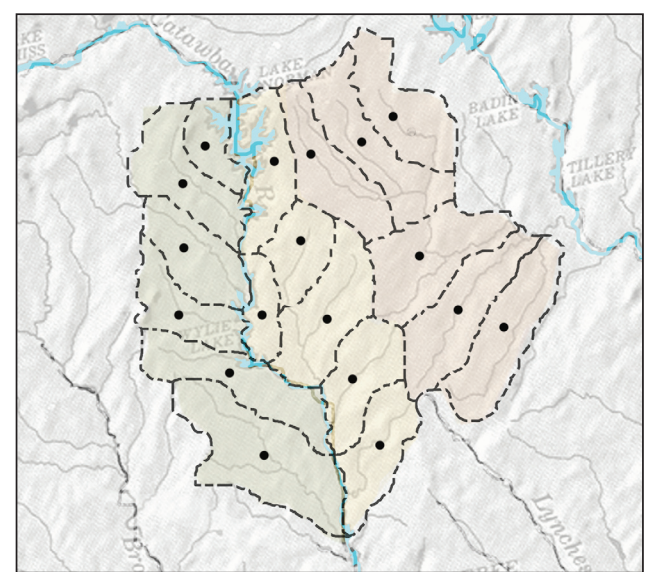
Eco Print



Regional Patterns



Basin Patterns



Citistate Patterns



# Think and Act

## Addictions and Insanity Characterize Civilization

From Endgame by Derrick Jensen (2006)

Here is how governments and people in this culture spend money. These make clear their priorities. In 1998, governments and people spent U.S. \$6 billion on basic education across the world; \$8 billion on cosmetics in the United States; \$9 billion on water and sanitation for everyone in the world; \$11 billion on ice cream in Europe; \$12 billion on reproductive health for all women in the world; \$12 billion on perfumes in Europe and the United States; \$13 billion on basic health and nutrition for everyone in the world; \$17 billion on pet foods in Europe and the United States; \$35 billion on business entertainment in Japan; \$50 billion on cigarettes in Europe; \$105 billion on alcoholic drinks in Europe; \$400 billion on narcotic drugs in the world; \$780 billion on military spending in the world. As the compiler of the list notes: "It would seem ironic that the world spends more on things to destroy each other (military) and to destroy ourselves (drugs, alcohol and cigarettes) than on anything else."

Most of my students at the prison are there at least partly because of drugs. Since the prison is a supermax, almost none of them are there for simple possession or even dealing. Many are in for armed robbery committed to support their habits or for murders committed under the influence or during drug deals gone bad.

Nearly all of them hate prison with a passion I've rarely seen

matched. They hate it partly because of characteristics that make prison really the quintessence of civilization: its routine dehumanization, its destruction of community, its isolation. My students are deprived of their families, with many knowing their children only through occasional letters and infrequent photos; they've shown me high school graduation pictures of children they've not seen since they were six and not held since they were infants. They've shown me pictures of wives and parents they'll never see again. Prisons also mirror and magnify the bureaucratic power structures and strict rules that characterize civilization. This is when you eat. This is what you eat. This is how many books you may have (which must have been sent directly from a bookstore or publisher). This is the sort of writing implement you may use. This is the sort you may not.

Those prisoners who do not hate prison generally fall into a very few categories. There are lifers and a few others — usually those who've already served decades — who've come to an enlightened sort of acceptance — the serenity to accept things they cannot change.

There are people whose horrific childhoods make prison a comparative cakewalk. And there are J-cats, or crazy people (J-cat stands for category J, a prison classification meaning the insane).

Yet when I ask my students whether they'll use again when they get out, even at the risk of



coming back to prison, most say, "Yes."

"It's very difficult," one said to me. "The first problem is the physical addiction. That can be hard to beat. And if you beat that, there's still the memory of how good it feels. Even though I've been clean now all these years in prison if you put drugs in front of me right now I'd want to take them, just so I could feel that good again. But these problems are nothing compared to the emotional addiction. So much of my identity has been wrapped up in drugs. Drugs became who I am. Without them I was nothing. But even kicking the emotional addiction still isn't the hardest part. It's all of my relationships. My wife and I used together — that was all bound up in our courtship, in our sex-life, in our daily activities. And she still uses. What am I supposed to

do when I get out? Not only do I have to give up this thing that makes me feel so very good — or at least I think it makes me feel good — and not only do I have to step away from this thing that's been my identity for most of my life, but I'll have to change my whole web of friendships and maybe even my family. I'm facing a third strike if I get caught again, which means I'd be in forever, but even facing that I just don't know if I can give up so much."

One can be addicted to many things besides drugs, alcohol, tobacco. One can be addicted to television, sugar, coffee, low self-esteem, sex, authority, shopping, a specific (or specific type of) relationship. One can be addicted to a lifestyle. A whole culture, as we shall see (or perhaps as we already do), can be addicted to civilization.

My compact *Oxford English*

*Dictionary* defines the verb *addict* (in excruciatingly tiny print that seems to get tinier with each passing year) as "to bind, devote or attach oneself as a servant, disciple or adherent." In Roman law, an *addiction* was "A formal giving over or delivery by sentence of court. Hence, a surrender, or dedication, of any one to a master." It comes from the same root as *'dicere*, meaning to *pronounce*, as in a judge pronouncing a sentence upon someone. To be addicted is to be a slave. To be a slave is to be addicted. The heroin ceases to serve the addict and the addict begins to serve the heroin. We can say the same for civilization: it does not serve us but rather we serve it.

There's something desperately wrong with that.

\*\*\*\*

This might be a good time to remind readers of the necessary relationship between civilization and slavery, that in fact civilization originated in slavery, is based on slavery, requires slavery, would collapse without slavery. You needn't take my word for this, nor the word of anarchists, Luddites or indigenous peoples.

Nor do you merely need to take the word of pro-slavery philosophers or pro-technology CEOs. Nor do you merely need to take the word of Aristotle — propagandist extraordinaire — who wrote extensively in support of slavery and its necessity, indeed, its naturalness. Nor mainstream historians who recognize that, as Friedrich Engels

(admittedly not a mainstream — i.e., pro-capitalist, pro-civilization — historian) wrote, "Without slavery, no Greek state, no Greek art and science; without slavery, no Roman Empire. But without Hellenism and the Roman Empire as the base, also no modern Europe. We should never forget that our whole economic, political and intellectual development has as its presupposition a state of things in which slavery was as necessary as it is universally recognized."

You don't even have to take the word of modern anti-slavery activists who point out that there are more slaves in the world today than came across on the Middle Passage. Just look around.

Consider the immiseration inherent in the items surrounding you. Look for the slavery, both human and nonhuman, that went into their making. Just because you don't see the chains doesn't mean you don't benefit from their slavery and from their deaths. How many salmon died to provide you electricity? How many rivers and mountains were enslaved to make this aluminum can? How many trees died to make this book? Further, how many people do you know who hate their jobs? On the other hand, how many people do you know who love their lives and who live at least remotely integrated into the larger community that is their landbase?

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### INSIDE The Order . . .

Scope of EPA's Fracturing Study Raises Ire of Gas Industry

by Abrahm Lustgarten . . . . 4

Disputed Bay of Bengal "Vanishes" Say Scientists . . . . 4

Cambodia Protects Six Rare Birds . . . . 5

Bald Eagle Victim of Agency Corruption . . . . 5

Hawaiian Resort in Legal Trouble Over Seabird Deaths . . . . 5

Grassroots Rising Against Drilling by Mike Benard . . . . 6

PA Third Parties Want Fair Chance to Run for Office . . . . 6

U.S. and Russia Agree to Slash Nuclear Arsenals . . . . 7

How to Fight Hate in Your Community by Don Hazen . . . . 7

The Nanotech Gamble by Andrew Schneider . . . . 8

Silence by John Zerzan . . . . 9

Poetry: Dancing the Heart of the Spiral by Sally Klein . . . . 9

Poetry: Orange Canna Lilies by Sandy Chilcote . . . . 9

Earth Psalms: Song 18 by Angela Mangara . . . . 10

Encounters With Wonder: What the Light Calls Forth

by Elizabeth Ayers . . . . 10

Environmentalists Make Plea for Desert Preservation . . . . 10

Have You Heard the One About the Optimist and the Pessimist?

by Don Hazen . . . . 10

About Humane Traps and Exit Doors by Al Fry . . . . 11

Korean University Recycles Food Waste by Pyong Roh . . . . 11

Winning Battles But Losing War on Invasive Species . . . . 11

Mark's Green Party: Saving the Co-Op by Going for the Sale

by Mark Lautman . . . . 12

Thinking About Pigs by Bruce Wagman . . . . 12

Turning Capitalism on Its Head by Cooperating for

Sustainable Food by Vanessa Barrington . . . . 13

Peat Belongs Here/Scientists Call for Action on Bogs . . . . 13

Madagascar Reinstates Rainforest Protection Following Global

Internet Action by Glen Barry . . . . 14

Global Deforestation Slows, Forests Still Lost at 'Alarming Rate'

by Richard Black . . . . 14

Protests Halt Drilling Near Monongahela Forest . . . . 14

Borneo Natives Win Against Oil Palm Giant . . . . 14

Small-City Mayor Takes on Pentagon by Jo Comerford . . . . 15

Letters to the Editor . . . . 15

Japan Charges Sea Shepherd Captain With Five Crimes . . . . 16

Greenpeace Blocks Whale Meat Shipment . . . . 16

African Women Dancers Can Fill Graneries . . . . 16

### CORRECTION

Last month, on our front-page story "Gardening for Others Who Need Food," we wrote in the caption that Hal Zack rents garden space but in fact he pays nothing for garden space but rents his apartment.

### Global in Scope, "Down-Home" in Nature

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COUNSEL	FAIRNESS	TRUST
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KINDNESS	CHARITY	HOPE
COMPASSION	GENEROSITY	SECURITY
PEACE	HONOR	MERCY
MODESTY	FRIENDSHIP	CHIVALRY
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I no longer believe we can use the system to change the system. Let it all fall apart.

I no longer want to live in their world so I must create/find my own.

--- Kim Stenley, Taneytown MD



# Scope of EPA's Fracturing Study Raises Ire of Gas Industry

By **Abrahm Lustgarten**  
ProPublica, April 7, 2010

A federal study of hydraulic fracturing set to begin this spring is expected to provide the most expansive look yet at how the natural gas drilling process can affect drinking water supplies, according to interviews with EPA officials and a set of documents outlining the scope of the project. The research will take a substantial step beyond previous studies and focus on how a broad range of ancillary activity — not just the act of injecting fluids under pressure — may affect drinking water quality.

The oil and gas industry strongly opposes this new approach. The agency's intended research "goes well beyond relationships between hydraulic fracturing and drinking water," said Lee Fuller, vice president of government affairs for the Independent Petroleum Association of America in comments he submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency.

The "lifecycle" approach will allow the agency to take into account hundreds of reports of water contamination in gas drilling fields across the country. Although the agency hasn't settled on the exact details, researchers could examine both underground and surface water supplies, gas well construction errors, liquid waste disposal issues and chemical storage plans as part of its assessment.

The EPA begins public hearings today in Washington to nail down the scope of the study.

Plans for the study have attracted international attention and have been the focus of intense debate among lawmakers and the oil and gas industry. The findings could affect Congress' decision whether to repeal an exemption that shields the fracturing process from federal regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The EPA is undertaking the study in response to a wave of

reports of water contamination in drilling areas across the country and a Congressional mandate issued in an appropriations bill last fall. The agency had previously examined hydraulic fracturing in a 2004 study that was limited in scope and was widely criticized.

"When we did the 2004 study we were looking particularly for potential for impacts from hydraulic fracturing fluid underground to underground sources of drinking water," said Cynthia Dougherty, the EPA's director of the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water. "So it was a much narrower focus."

For the latest study, the EPA sent its scoping document to its Science Advisory Board asking for the group's input in designing the fracturing study. In the document, the EPA explained that information gained from looking at the impact from the start to the end of the process, called a lifecycle assessment "can help policymakers understand and make decisions about the breadth of issues related to hydraulic fracturing, including cross-media risks and the relationship to the entire natural gas production cycle."

In past interviews with ProPublica, Fuller has explained that, in his view, hydraulic fracturing shouldn't be blamed for any contamination unless the process of injecting fracturing fluids underground under pressure was "the sole" cause of contamination. If contamination seeped through cracks in a gas well's protective casing under pressure of the fracturing process, for example, he wouldn't attribute it to fracturing because the cracks may have existed before the fracturing process began and would be a well construction problem, not a fracturing problem.

Fuller's definition of fracturing-related contamination helps explain the oil and gas industry's steadfast claim that there is not a single case in which hydraulic



Photo by **Abrahm Lustgarten/ProPublica**

*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will conduct a nationwide scientific study to determine if drinking water problems are caused by the practice of injecting chemicals and water underground to fracture the gas-bearing rock.*

lic fracturing has been proven to have contaminated drinking water supplies.

An 18-month investigation by ProPublica, however, has shown more than 1,000 cases in which various aspects of the fracturing lifecycle have affected water supplies, including spills of fracturing fluid waste, cracking of underground cement and well casings meant to enclose the fracturing process, and methane gas traveling large distances underground through faults and fractures.

In planning its study, the EPA has made clear that for its purposes fracturing may play a role in many aspects of the drilling process and in many different environmental risks. The study could examine how well-construction activities have the potential to impact water, what specific materials or design practices would make a well suitable for fracturing and what are the most effective methods for measuring well integrity.

The EPA hopes to complete its research by late 2012, the end of President Obama's first term in office. Scientists say that may not be enough time to include



Photo from **Getty Images**

*A gas drilling rig near Gaylord, Michigan.*

substantial field monitoring and water analysis; policymakers say that is too long to wait for a decision from Congress.

The agency's conclusions could have wide-ranging effects. Last month President Dmitri Medvedev of Russia said he would curtail natural gas production by the state company Gazprom until the study is completed. In part that's because Medvedev isn't sure there will be a viable market for Russian gas if

the U.S. develops its domestic reserves and because he believes that the regulations that could result from the EPA study could determine whether the U.S. drills its own gas or imports it from overseas.

If the comments already submitted to the EPA by stakeholders are any indication, the research process will be contentious.

In Fuller's comments to the EPA, he said that the study shouldn't focus on the harm frac-

turing could inflict on water supplies but rather on whether current environmental regulations "effectively manage the environmental risks of the fracturing process."

"If these risks are well managed, the other questions are meaningless," he wrote. "The Scoping Materials Document fails to reflect this reality."

In another letter, Ben Wallace, chief operating officer of Penneco Oil Co., wrote: "The clear historical record shows that hydraulic fracturing has been employed for decades successfully without incident. We are concerned that bureaucratic machinations have caused the EPA to hypothesize a problem and that EPA is now seeking research to justify a solution to a nonexistent problem."

Environmental officials from New York City, who are concerned about how plans to drill for gas in the state's Marcellus Shale will affect the city's water supply, also submitted comments to the EPA, urging the agency to follow through with its ambitious plans.

"The City concluded that horizontal drilling and high-volume hydraulic fracturing using the current technologies pose an unacceptable threat to the water supply of nine million New Yorkers and cannot be safely permitted in the watershed," wrote Caswell Holloway, commissioner of New York City's Department of Environmental Protection. The city encouraged the Science Advisory Board and the EPA "to take a hard look at this activity and to recognize that the absence of contamination does not necessarily imply an activity is safe but may actually reflect extensive gaps in monitoring information."

**Write to Abrahm Lustgarten at [Abrahm.Lustgarten@propublica.org](mailto:Abrahm.Lustgarten@propublica.org). Want to know more? Follow ProPublica on Facebook and Twitter and get ProPublica headlines delivered by email every day.**

## Disputed Bay of Bengal "Vanishes" Say Scientists

Submitted by **Sandy Chilcote** with this note: *A large portion of Bangladesh is going under water as the ocean rises and, as the ice melts in the mountains, rivers fill with silt, creating "land."*

BBC News March 24, 2010

A tiny island claimed for years by India and Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal has disappeared beneath the rising seas, scientists in India say. The uninhabited territory south of the Hariabhanga River was known as New Moore Island to the Indians and South Talpatti Island to the Bangladeshis.

Recent satellite images show the whole island under water, says the School of Oceanographic Studies in Calcutta. Its scientists say other nearby islands could also vanish as sea levels rise.

### Beneath the Waves

The BBC's Chris Morris in Delhi says there has never been



*(Left) A tiny island claimed for years by India and Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal has disappeared beneath the rising seas, scientists in India say.*

*(Right) Loss of land is an annual reality for many Bangladeshis.*



a permanent settlement on the now-vanished island, which even in its heyday was never more than two metres (about six feet) above sea level.

In the past, however, the territorial dispute led to visits by Indian naval vessels and the tem-

porary deployment of a contingent from the country's Border Security Force.

"What these two countries could not achieve from years of talking, has been resolved by global warming," said Professor Sugata Hazra of the School

of Oceanographic Studies at Jadavpur University in Calcutta.

Anyone wishing to visit now, he observed, would have to think of travelling by submarine.

Professor Hazra said his studies revealed that sea levels in this part of the Bay of Bengal have

risen much faster over the past decade than they had done in the previous 15 years.

And he predicts that in the coming decade other islands in the Sundarbans delta region will follow New Moore, or South Talpatti, beneath the waves.

"We will have ever larger numbers of people displaced from the Sunderbans as more island areas come under water," Prof Hazra said.

*[Sandy supplied the following information separately.]*

The Sundarbans National Park (Bengali: *Shundorbôn Jatio Uddan*) is a National Park, Tiger Reserve, UNESCO World Heritage Site and a Biosphere Reserve located in the Sundarbans delta in the Indian state of West Bengal. This region is densely covered by mangrove forests and is one of the largest reserves for the Bengal tiger.

It is also home to a variety

of bird, reptile and invertebrate species, including the salt-water crocodile.

In 1911, it was described as a tract of waste country which had never been surveyed nor had the census been extended to it. It then stretched for about 165 miles from the mouth of the Hugli to the mouth of the Meghna and was bordered inland by the three settled districts of the twenty-four Parganas, Khulna and Backergunje.

The total area (including water) was estimated at 6,526 square miles. The present Sundarbans National Park was declared as the core area of Sundarbans Tiger Reserve in 1973 and a wildlife sanctuary in 1977. On May 4th, 1984 it was declared a National Park. It was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1987.

The whole Sundarbans area was declared as Biosphere Reserve in 1989.

## The Unmatched Resilience of Mangroves

*Continued from page 1*

tion. Time has come to aesthetically accept mangroves as a flora even though it is close to human settlements at the margin of rivers, estuaries and the sea.

While the world should unite in investing in forest preservation and allowing the forest keepers to market the carbon stored in uncut trees, the vulnerability of tropical forests to extended dry spells during events such as *El Nino* and the resilience of mangroves should make us think of reassessing the policies towards forest conservation.

Forest fires are a major source of carbon emissions, causing global warming. Carbon trading in forest conservation should be a comprehen-

sive approach, not just aimed at logging but also preventing fire in the woods and dousing it. This might require repeated cloud seeding and protective measures to minimize the chances of sparks that ignite the fires in the woods.

It is far more economical and practical to redouble investment in mangroves. They thrive in seawater, withstand dry conditions, break up the spread of forest fires and continue to sequester carbon when other trees perish in fires.

With reductions in freshwater wetlands and declining recharge, the uptake of groundwater by their root systems will be increasingly challenged by climate change. The resilience of mangroves should motivate us to replen-

ish them to protect at least the coastal zone where they grow and where population and human economic interests are concentrated.

In addition to controlling coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion, absorbing the impact of sea storms, providing a habitat for commercial fish, protecting coral reefs and developing a biodiverse system, the carbon sequestering role of mangroves should be appropriately assessed and valued.

It is not just about protecting what is left but actively restoring what has been lost as a major step in our fight against the effects of climate change. Investing now will be cheaper than in the future. Mangrove reforestation can help us reimburse a substantial part of U.S.

\$2-5 trillion annually lost in ecosystem services. If the reported value of carbon sequestration by mangroves (1.5 metric tons/hectare/year) is correct, the Earth is losing some 225,000 tons of carbon sequestration potential at the current rate of 1% (or 150,000 hectares or 370,650 acres) of mangrove area loss per year.

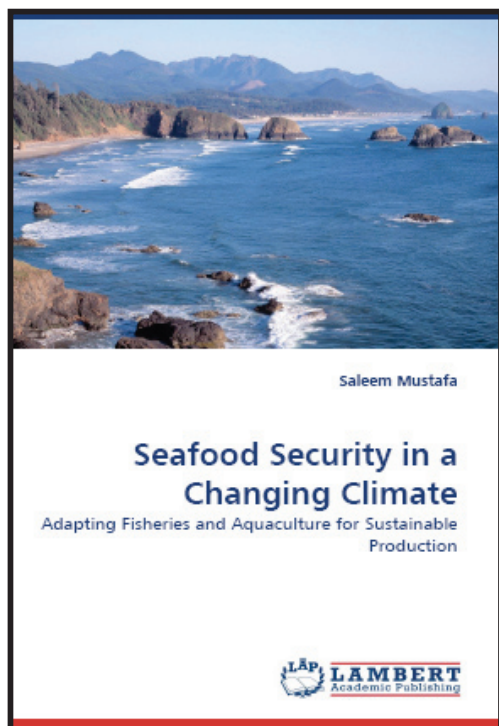
Since climate change is a global issue, investment in carbon sequestration should be an international project. Storage of carbon in plants is worth trillions of dollars.

Since Sabah (where I live) has the largest mangrove cover in Malaysia, it will share the largest investment in carbon trading. Furthermore, the *Rhizophora* species which is predominant in Sabah is known for higher carbon

sequestration ability than some other species. This makes this east Malaysian state of Sabah an appropriate place for international investment in carbon markets and a potential carbon trading hub of the country.

**Contact Dr. Prof. Saleem Mustafa at [saleem@ums.edu.my](mailto:saleem@ums.edu.my). He has just finished writing a book (right). It is available at Amazon.**

**Mustafa tells the story of his cameraman: "Yusdi, went along with me to take pictures. His camera is more powerful than mine. He got down and took photos from a safe distance. As you can see, it wasn't a very clear blue sky due to smoke."**





# Birds

## Cambodia Protects Floodplain Grasslands Sheltering Six Rare Birds

NEW YORK, New York, March 18, 2010 (ENS) — The Cambodian government has decided to protect six of the largest remaining stretches of lowland grasslands in Southeast Asia. The six sites, one in Siem Reap province and five in Kampong Thom province, encompass about 77,000 acres (31,160 hectares).

The sites are located in and around Cambodia's Tonle Sap, Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake. They contain unique, seasonally-flooded grasslands that form a refuge for many globally threatened birds.

The grasslands are a fishing, grazing and deep-water, rice-farming resource for local communities. While most of the sites have been partially protected by a provincial conservation order, they remained vulnerable to land-clearing and dam-building activities associated with large-scale commercial rice production.

The new designations empower staff from Cambodia's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to prevent these activities.

The designation of the protected areas is the result of work done over the past four years by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), based at New York's Bronx Zoo, in collaboration with Cambodia's Forestry and Fisheries Administration, local governments and community stakeholders.

As part of that effort, WCS has sourced funds and provided technical advice and management support.

Other partners include the Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole Cambodgien, the Sam Veasna Center, BirdLife International in Indochina, the Angkor Center for Conservation of Biodiversity and the University of East Anglia.

"Recognizing the importance of these sites as part of Cambodia's unique natural heritage shows the national government's great commitment to the conservation of some of the country's valued landscapes," said WCS President and CEO Dr. Steven Sanderson.

Among the species that will benefit from the designation is the Critically Endangered Bengal florican (see photo), *Eupodotis bengalensis*, the world's largest and rarest bustard.

The global population of this ground-nesting bird, distinguished by dramatic high-jump displays during mating, is estimated at less than 1,300. More than half the world's Bengal floricans live in Cambodia.

"Traditionally the grasslands around the Great Lake have been communally owned and a unique agricultural ecology has evolved over the centuries that has pro-



Photo by Mai Mark

Large areas of Tonle Sap grasslands are flooded during each rainy season, supporting a large freshwater fishery.

vided a niche for the Bengal florican," said Jonathan Eames, program manager with BirdLife in Indochina.

The Tonle Sap grasslands, so important for breeding Bengal floricans, have declined by 60 percent since the late 1990s, with the intensification of rice cultivation playing a major role in this loss.

While florican habitat benefits from the traditional low-intensity agricultural practices such as seasonal burning, plowing, planting and harvesting, illegal commercial rice farming destroys its habitat, forcing floricans into ever-shrinking areas.

The loss of grassland habitat in the Tonle Sap floodplain led to the 2006 designation of 310 square kilometers (193 square miles) of land as Integrated Farming and Biodiversity Areas, where large-scale habitat conversion is forbidden but extensive traditional use is encouraged.

The conservation groups praised the Cambodian government for the new declaration, which is the strongest step Cambodia has taken to date to protect the habitat of floricans and other bird species living in the protected areas, including Sarus cranes, storks, ibises and rare eagles.

In 2006, the first comprehensive survey for Bengal florican and other grassland bird species was jointly conducted by BirdLife and the Wildlife Conservation Society in the provinces surrounding the Tonle Sap lake. Information gained during the survey was used as a foundation for defining areas to be conserved.

A crude estimate, to be refined, put the Cambodian Bengal Florican population at between 700



Photo by Allan Michaud courtesy BirdLife International  
Bengal florican on the Tonle Sap grasslands.

and 900 individuals.

Researchers found that the disappearance of grassland habitat in Kampong Thom and Siem Reap provinces was a key reason behind the decline in Bengal floricans. They said the floricans have been disappearing because of large-scale changes in agricultural techniques that have occurred throughout Southeast Asia.

The collaborative project to protect the grasslands of Tonle Sap has been supported by grants from: Fondation Ensemble, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Netherlands Ecosystem Grants Program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife Without Borders' Critically Endangered Animal Conservation Fund, the UNDP/GEF-funded Tonle Sap Conservation Project and WCS Trustee Eleanor Briggs.

Funding was also provided by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, administered through BirdLife International in Indochina. This Fund is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank.

Richard Salter, international team leader for the Tonle Sap Conservation Project, has pointed out that establishing a set of common rules and an effective monitoring system for the sanctuary is a work in progress. He believes that problems of hunting and poaching are declining as local residents see the natural and economic value of preserving the area both as a biosphere and as a tourist destination.

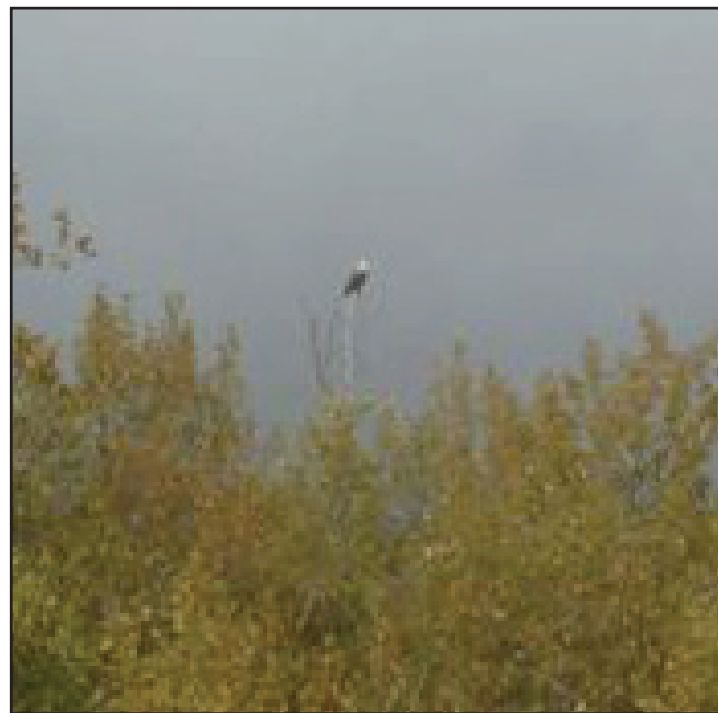


Photo by Criss Cefus

Eagle on Cabot Trail, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, Canada.

## Arizona's Desert Nesting Bald Eagle Victim of Agency Corruption Again

Fish and Wildlife Documents Released

Center for Biological Diversity  
March 23, 2010

PHOENIX, Arizona — Newly obtained documents reveal that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) bald eagle experts have again been overruled by their political superiors in order to remove Endangered Species Act protection for Arizona's desert nesting bald eagles.

An August 24, 2009 memo from Regional Fish and Wildlife Director Benjamin Tuggle to Assistant Fish and Wildlife Director Gary Frazer states that the Arizona population "is discrete and significant" to the bald eagle population as a whole "based on its persistence in an unusual or unique [desert] ecological setting." Tuggle's memo summarizes more than 30 years of biological studies and the consensus of every recognized bald eagle expert.

In a response dated December 4, 2009, Frazer dismisses the experts' opinion, advising that his "...staff will work with you on development of the revised version of the finding. Obviously, the finding should not simply cite my conclusion..."

This scenario is a repeat of the agency's attempts in 2006 and 2007 to remove protection from Arizona's reproductively, geographically, biologically and behaviorally isolated population of approximately 160 individuals and 60 breeding pairs.

In these past attempts, the agency tried to suppress the consensus science presented in an October 6, 2004 petition from the Center for Biological Diversity and Maricopa Audubon requesting increased protection for the desert bald eagle distinct population segment (DPS).

On March 5, 2008, U.S. District Court Judge Mary Murguia rejected the last agency rule on the grounds that agency scientists "...received 'marching or-

A Word From Our Photographer

*It is a far-away picture of the Eagle but I believe you can enlarge it and see it much better and maybe you can use the picture that way. I just thought it was really a great shot of such a Majestic Bird . . . .*

Criss Cefus

ders' and were directed to find an analysis that fit with a negative 90-day finding on the DPS status of the desert bald eagle."

"Indeed, the record indicates that each time FWS biologists from the FWS's Arizona Field Office assessed whether listing the desert bald eagle population as a DPS may be warranted, they found that 'no information in [the FWS's] files refutes Plaintiffs' petition..." Judge Murguia added.

"President Obama promised that his administration's decisions would be based on science. Department of Interior and Fish and Wildlife Service administrators have obviously not gotten the message," said Herb Fibel, Maricopa Audubon president.

"For more than three decades our desert nesting bald eagle has been recognized as unique and significant by every acknowledged eagle expert. The science has not changed but, just as if Bush were still in office, political hacks in D.C. are trying once again to throw our eagles into the garbage for the benefit of their developer patrons.

"We will not allow this to happen without an historic fight. We look forward to confronting these bullies in the courtroom and beyond," said Dr. Robin Silver of the Center.

Contact: Dr. Robin Silver, Center for Biological Diversity at 602-799-3275 or Herb Fibel, Maricopa Audubon Society at 480-226-6014.



(left) St. Regis Princeville on Kauai's North Shore is being sued for failure to prevent the deaths of rare native seabirds. Photo by Lesleeann74.



(right) Hawaiian petrels, critically imperiled, are attracted to bright lights in and around the resort. Photo by Matt Brady.

## Luxury Hawaiian Resort in Legal Trouble Over Seabird Deaths

LIHUE, Kauai, March 3, 2010 (ENS, excerpt) — Four conservation groups today advised the St. Regis Princeville Resort on Kauai's North Shore of their intent to sue over the resort's failure to prevent the deaths of rare native seabirds, in violation of the federal Endangered Species Act.

The St. Regis is owned by Starwood Hotels and Resorts, which also owns the Westin, Sheraton, Four Points by Sheraton, W Hotels and Le Meri-

dien brands. During the fledging season from late September to early December, critically imperiled Newell's shearwaters and Hawaiian petrels heading to sea are attracted to bright lights in and around the resort. The building is located on a coastal bluff in an otherwise dark part of the North Shore that is an important seabird flyway.

Trapped in the lights' glare, the confused birds circle until they fall exhausted to the ground

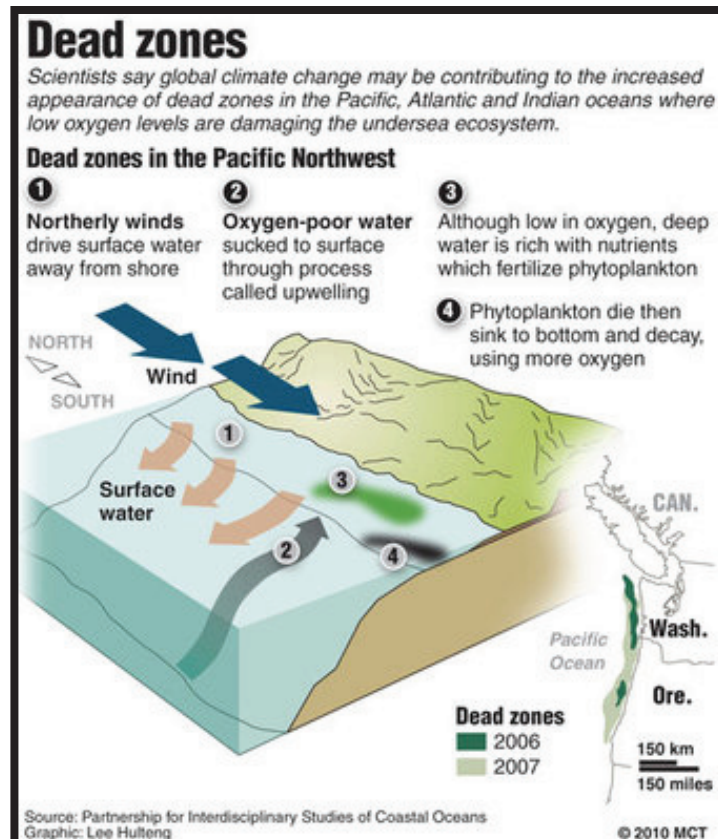
or strike the resort's buildings.

The Hawaii-based groups Hui Ho'omalua i Ka 'Aina and Conservation Council for Hawaii, as well as the mainland-based Center for Biological Diversity and American Bird Conservancy, are represented in the legal action by the public interest environmental law firm Earthjustice.

Earthjustice attorney David Henkin said the St. Regis has failed to seek an incidental take permit, as required by law, claiming that it is waiting for the State

of Hawaii's Division of Forestry and Wildlife to prepare an island-wide plan for Kauai, which is not expected to be completed for another two years.

"As a multi-billion dollar corporation that is single-handedly responsible for a quarter of the bird deaths, Starwood should not be asking Hawaii's taxpayers to foot the bill for coming up with a plan for the St. Regis," Henkin said. Henkin said the St. Regis should apply for its own permit...





# Grassroots Rising Against Drilling

Citizens gather on Easter weekend to hear six speakers on gas drilling; including property owner, professors from Pitt and Duquesne.

By Mike Benard © 2010  
Clearville, Pennsylvania

Landowners and communities are raising questions about the problems and the opportunities of drilling the gas-rich Marcellus Shale formation.

While natural gas is advertised as the clean burning fuel, the process for getting natural gas out of the ground is far from clean.

So folks are looking for advice: To drill or not to drill ... to lease or not to lease?

On the day before Easter Sunday, more than 40 property owners came to a community meeting looking for answers about natural gas drilling held at the Pleasant Union Church in Clearville, Pennsylvania. It was sponsored by the Concerned Clearville Citizens group.

In this beautiful country setting, they listened to and questioned six speakers, five of whom traveled more than 100 miles to participate in the informational meeting about gas drilling.

Pennsylvania State Representative Dick Hess (R. 78<sup>th</sup> District) was also in attendance and listened and spoke individually with audience members and speakers.

## Spectra Energy Takes Notes

At least one gas company representative attended but Kevin McCreary, a landman for Spectra Energy, did not speak or ask questions. Instead he took notes. And presumably sent a message back to the company's Houston headquarters. McCreary and a colleague sat at a round table by themselves. No other audience members sat with them.

## Property Owner Ron Gulla

After opening comments by Sandra McDaniel, a Clearville property owner and correspondent for the Clearville Concerned Citizens, Ron Gulla spoke.

Gulla's experience with the gas industry and the Pennsylvania

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been widely reported. He owns a 141-acre farm in Hickory, Pennsylvania where Range Resources drilled the second Marcellus Shale well in Pennsylvania. The year was 2005.

Today, he is in litigation with Range Resources and he tells audiences, "After what they did to my land, I would never, ever lease. And when I found out about the chemicals — why would I ever let anyone come onto my property and dump chemicals!"

He challenges the gas industry: If all of this gas drilling is so benign — why did the industry get an exemption from the 2005 Federal Safe Drinking Water Act to exclude hydraulic fracturing and the chemicals used from public disclosure?

## Dead Livestock, Toxic Chemicals

Gulla catalogued example after example. "In Hickory, Pennsylvania we've got these compressors everywhere. Property owners are livid. They can't live around them. They stink. They emit carcinogens, neurotoxins."

He told of farmers he had visited who lost their clean water and then livestock after gas drilling operations began.

"One farmer had 18 cows that had bred," Gulla continued. "Ten of those cows had stillborn calves. Four of those calves had blue eyes when they were born; one had a cleft palette; five were born with no irises or pupils — just white eyes."

Another farmer he visited has lost 75 head of registered Angus cattle, at last count.

Gulla leaned toward his audience. "You don't lose cattle like that! I farmed! You don't lose cattle like that. You folks know."

## Governor Rendell: Ally of Gas Industry

"Our governor isn't going to help us because he is an ally for the oil and gas industry and that's why our state Department of Environmental Protection hasn't done anything," Gulla explained.

That's why the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is starting to get involved, because the DEP isn't doing its job, Gulla added. He gave the phone number for the EPA's "Eyes on Drilling" Tipline: 877-919-4372.

"You can't drink gas," Gulla told the audience. "Without water, we're cooked."

The Hickory property owner



Photo by Mike Benard

Chuck Christen of Pitt updated the Clearville, Pennsylvania audience on a new Web site and training programs that are about to begin to help people deal with gas drilling issues.

recommended that his audience get their water tested by a state-accredited testing laboratory, especially if considering leasing or if gas industry operations are moving into the neighborhood.

"Tell the lab you want them to test for any byproducts related to gas drilling operations," he said. "You'll want proof of the quality of your water before anyone drills — in case it changes later. That is why using a state-accredited testing lab is so important."

## 'Boom Town' Sales Pitch

University of Pittsburgh Professor Dan Volz spoke next. "Much is said about the benefits of drilling in the Marcellus Shale," Volz said. "But none of the cost-benefit analyses touted by the gas industry and government take into account what is known as 'public goods' — like impacts on air and water."

Volz noted that hydraulic fracturing fluid is more than water and sand, as some suggest. It includes a mix of chemicals in a gel form and these chemicals include toxins like endocrine disruptors.

In addition, he said, "When you hydro frac rock — or inject this water-sand-chemical mix into the shale in order to push out the gas — you are also picking up heavy metals and other harmful elements from the shale formation itself."

So the production water that is injected into the shale to push out the gas contains toxic chemicals. And the flowback water which returns to the surface now contains heavy metals on top of that.

"No adequate disposal or

## Resources for More Information

**EPA's Natural Gas Drilling Toll-Free Tip Line:** 877-919-4372. Announced in January 2010, the EPA said: "Public concern about the environmental impacts of oil and natural gas drilling has increased in recent months, particularly regarding development of the Marcellus Shale formation where a significant amount of activity is occurring. ... EPA wants to get a better understanding of what people are experiencing and observing as a result of these drilling activities. The information collected may also be useful in investigating industry practices."

**National Response Center:** The following toll-free number should be used in the event of an emergency, such as a spill or release of hazardous material to the environment, including oil or gas emissions: 800-424-8802.

**Mountain Research:** A state-accredited environmental engineering and laboratory services company serves customers in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia and Ohio. It's listing here is not intended as a recommendation but it is a reference point for property owners to understand what is available in terms of water testing. Toll-free phone: 800-837-4674. Web site: <http://www.mountainresearch.com>.

**University of Pittsburgh's Center for Healthy Environments & Communities:** Formed to help individuals and communities identify the most important environmental problems facing them. Phone: 412-624-9379. Web site: <http://www.chec.pitt.edu>.

treatment exists for water used in the hydraulic fracturing process to extract natural gas from shale formations like the Marcellus," Volz said. "And we are talking about millions of gallons of water."

As one report reveals, a single, typical horizontal well in the Marcellus Shale requires from 1.5 million to 9 million gallons of water during the four to six weeks of hydraulic fracturing that takes place.

## Baseline Research

Chuck Christen, Director of Operations at Pitt's Center for Healthy Environments and Communities (CHEC), spoke next. He told the audience that a baseline research proposal to understand the health and environmental impact of gas drilling has been submitted for funding.

"But good research takes time," Christen cautioned. "Even

if we started in July, we're probably not going to have information back for at least a year or more."

In the meantime, there is much that can be done, he said. "As a community-based environmental research center, CHEC is moving ahead in several areas."

## New Web Site: Sharing Information

CHEC will soon launch a Web site to collect, organize, share and distribute information citizens can use to monitor and track the impact of gas drilling operations. The Web site will also provide information tools to help educate the public.

The software on the Web site is so easy and effective to use, he said, that it is being introduced to an Amazon tribe to track logging that is infringing on their lands — some 600,000 acres of the rainforest.

## 'Neighborhood Watch' Workshops

Pitt's CHEC team will soon start to train citizens on what to observe about gas drilling operations and how to report it. Christen said they would work through a range of organizations, including Trout Unlimited, local rod and gun clubs, fishing clubs, Sierra Club, League of Women Voters and more.

In the meantime, citizens can go to CHEC's Web site where there is a section on the Marcellus Shale that is updated regularly. The center can also be contacted through its Web site. Link: <http://www.chec.pitt.edu/MarcellusShale.html>.

Coming up, the Mayor of DISH, Texas, Calvin Tillman, is talking on the gas industry for environmental and health problems surfacing in Texas and in states across the country.

Mayor Tillman is returning to Pennsylvania and New York for a "Marcellus Shale Public Speaking Tour." One of his stops was in Clearville on April 17<sup>th</sup>. For information about local activism, contact Angel Smith in Clearville at 814-784-0020.

*Mike Benard is a Clearville, Pennsylvania, property owner who also runs a property rights Web site born out of a battle against eminent domain driven by a gas transmission and storage company. He can be contacted through his Web site at this link: <http://www.spectraenergywatch.com/blog>.*

# PA Third Parties Want Fair Chance to Run for Office

Greens and Libs Condemn Decision in Ballot Access Lawsuit

Green Party of Pennsylvania: <http://www.gpofpa.org> and  
Libertarian Party of PA: <http://www.lppa.org>  
April 15, 2010

\* Green Party, Libertarian Party and Constitution Party filed federal lawsuit to challenge discriminatory provisions and enforcement of ballot access laws

\* Judge, a former state court judge, concludes that other state court judges are not to blame for Pennsylvania's ballot access woes

The Green Party of Pennsylvania and the Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania condemned a decision by federal Judge Lawrence Stengel last week. Stengel concluded that the lawsuit, brought by the Green, Constitution and Libertarian Parties of Pennsylvania targeted the wrong plaintiffs and, thus, threw out the case.

Stengel ruled that the plaintiffs lack standing to challenge the Pennsylvania system of using courts to determine if petitions are valid and assessing court costs against candidates whose petitions are deemed not to have

enough signatures. In recent years, these costs have amounted to over \$80,000 for the "crime" of trying to run for public office.

The lawsuit, Constitution Party v. Cortes, was filed last May on behalf of the alternative parties by the Center for Competitive Democracy (CCD), a non-partisan, non-profit 501(c)(3) legal advocacy group. The suit, filed in federal District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, challenged the constitutionality of the Pennsylvania Election Code provisions that authorize courts to order candidates to pay litigation costs and fees to private parties who challenge their nomination papers.

Due to the courts' role in finding candidates, which is not required by Pennsylvania law, the lawsuit specifically listed State Court Judges as the plaintiffs in the case. And because the lawsuit targeted State Court Judges, it was filed in federal court to avoid a conflict of interest.

However, last week, federal court Judge Stengel did not agree with this line of thinking and threw out the case due to the plaintiff's "lack of standing."

Judge Stengel refused to comment on the other two issues in the case. One issue was the systematic refusal of the Pennsylvania Department of Elections to tally write-ins. A closely related issue is that many counties in Pennsylvania don't count and report any write-ins. The other unmentioned issue in the deci-

sion is the 15% registration threshold for a party to be fully ballot-qualified.

Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania Chair Michael Robertson noted, "It is clear from this ruling that federal courts cannot be relied upon to uphold the integrity of the electoral process any more than the Commonwealth courts. It is truly a shame when our troops are sent to foreign lands to secure choices for foreign voters that our citizens do not enjoy."

Sadly, this is yet another defeat in a long line of attempts by Pennsylvania's alternative parties to seek justice in the electoral arena.

"Everyone knows Pennsylvania's ballot access laws are discriminatory to alternative political parties. The laws are made by the Democrats and Republicans in the state assembly and then enforced by other Democrats and Republicans in the courts. There is no incentive for anyone currently in power to change the rules to allow people out of power to more easily challenge their authority. The situation is outrageous," said Steve Baker, Chair of the Green Party of York County. "The Pennsylvania Constitution states that 'Pennsylvania Elections shall be free and equal; yet the partisan courts won't acknowledge even their own framework of law.'"

Marakay Rogers, the Libertarian Party candidate for Governor, remarked, "Once again, the voters of Pennsylvania are being insulted by court rulings that prevent them

from having a real choice of candidates as other states give their voters. The two old parties that dominate Pennsylvania's legislature and courts are only providing us with the illusion of a free vote when all parties' candidates are not given equal opportunities to make it to the ballot."

Despite this set-back, Greens and Libertarians vowed to keep fighting. "We will continue to fight these horrible laws in the courts and in the legislature," said GPPA Steering Committee Member Bob Small. "Luckily, we can also look to the Voters' Choice Act to bring about some sanity to ballot access in Pennsylvania." Both parties are members of the Pennsylvania Ballot Access Coalition.

The Voters' Choice Act, or SB 252, was introduced by Senator Mike Folmer (R-Lebanon) last year. The bill would equalize bal-

lot access across all parties, not just the Democrats and Republicans. Unfortunately, the bill has been sitting in committee for over a year with little indication that it will be passed before the end of the year.

Stated Allegheny County Libertarian Mark Crowley said, "With about 10 million age-eligible Pennsylvania voters, about 7 million registered as Democrat or Republican, only one-half typically vote. That means 6.5 million of the 10 million consistently reject the major party choices. No wonder such an uninspiring and unpopular minority needs court decisions like this to protect its incumbency."

Said 2006 Green Party Senate Candidate Carl Romanelli, "Until people get angry about the erosion of their most fundamental right — the right to vote for the candidate of their choice — we

will continue to see candidates restricted from the ballot. I don't know anyone who thinks that our politicians are doing a good job at fixing our most pressing problems. If we have any hope at fixing our economy, our schools or our environment, we'll need to elect new people with new ideas to Harrisburg."

## Contact:

I.K. Samways, Green Party of PA Chair, 412-215-9161, [isamways@aol.com](mailto:isamways@aol.com).

Steve Baker, Green Party of PA, 717-845-8697 or 717-755-1463, [thebeaker@pa.net](mailto:thebeaker@pa.net).

Doug Leard, Libertarian Party of PA Media Relations, Media-Relations@lppa.org.

Michael Robertson, Libertarian Party of PA Chair, 1-800-R-RIGHTS, [chair@lppa.org](mailto:chair@lppa.org).



## Find Green Candidates

[www.NewMenu.org](http://www.NewMenu.org)

Find Greens running for office near you.

web design provided by  
[www.DancingTreesWeb.com](http://www.DancingTreesWeb.com)



## News Briefs

### Prison Computer Recycling Puts Staff and Inmates at Risk

#### High Toxic Levels at Three Federal Prisons but Lack of Records Masks Health Effect

PEER Press Release  
January 19, 2010

Washington, D.C. — Federal prisoners and staff overseers were exposed for years to excessive levels of toxic heavy metals during computer recycling operations, according to a new National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) report posted today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). The absence of record-keeping inside the prisons, however, prevented NIOSH from documenting any health problems from these illegal levels of exposure.

The December 22, 2009 NIOSH report was submitted to the Justice Department Office of Inspector General as part of its system-wide review of all the federal prison recycling centers. This NIOSH report covered conditions at federal prisons in Atwater (CA), Elkton (OH), Texarkana (TX) and Marianna (FL) and must be publicly displayed at each institution.

These recycling operations involve prisoners breaking up computer components, often with hammers, at for-profit prison industries. NIOSH concluded that, for years, these recycling operations lacked adequate containment to prevent workers from being coated with dangerous amounts of lead, cadmium and other heavy metals inside the hardware. The NIOSH report concluded that prison industry managers failed to:

- Conduct "adequate planning and job hazard analysis before initiating electronics recycling operations;"
- Identify "potential health hazards...in a timely manner." As a result, "adequate hazard controls were not established for several years at some BOP [Bureau of Prison] institutions;" and
- Provide any "training, guidance or oversight needed to address health hazards associated with electronics recycling" to staff and inmate workers.

NIOSH found that prison staff and inmates had been exposed to illegally high levels of toxins for years at all of the facilities it inspected except the one at Marianna. This report is part of the Justice Department Inspector General (IG) investigation, begun in 2006, into occupational and environmental compliance of prison computer recycling operations and the accountability of managers who ignored previous reports of problems. This Justice IG review was prompted by a whistleblower disclosure filed by a BOP safety manager named Leroy Smith back in 2004. According to the NIOSH report, it appears that the inspections spawned by Smith's disclosures had led to new hazard-reduction practices.

"When the Justice Department IG finally completes its investigation, we hope that it names the particular federal managers responsible for these dangerous conditions and recommends appropriate disciplinary action," stated PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch, whose organization assisted Smith. "It is outrageous that federal prisons have been illegally undercutting legitimate recyclers to the potential detriment of their own staff and the inmates in their custody."

Contact PEER at 202-265-7337.

### Dark Side of Bright Digital Spaces: Wizardry Relies on Dirty Energy of Past

By Jason Mark, excerpt  
Earth Island Journal, April 5, 2010

The Internet through which you are reading these words can seem the very pinnacle of bright and shiny modernity. The Web is clean. It's glowing. It has an etherealness that feels apart from the brutishness of the world.

But don't be fooled. These words are likely zipping to you courtesy of one the filthiest and most primitive forms of electricity generation: coal. The 21st-century wizardry of iPhones, laptops and iPads wouldn't be possible without the coal-fired power plants whose design has changed little since the 19th century. Our futuristic present relies on the technologies of the past.

I was reminded of that ever-startling fact this week when Greenpeace released a report concluding that, if taken together, global information and communication technologies would represent the fifth largest electricity user in the world — behind the U.S., Japan, China and Russia.

The most prominent technol-

ogy and communication companies — Apple, Facebook, Microsoft, Yahoo, Google — all rely on some coal-fired electricity to run the data centers that make their products work, according to the Greenpeace report.

Today, the global information and communication sector is responsible for as much greenhouse gas emissions as the airline industry. Thanks to the explosion in the popularity of digital gadgets, that percentage is expected to double in the next 10 years.

A major reason for this is the surge in what's called "cloud computing." Take Apple's fresh-off-the-assembly-line iPad. When users watch movies, check their Facebook pages, fetch emails or search Google, most of the content isn't stored on the device but instead is delivered in real-time from the Internet, which relies on giant data centers.

Together, these data centers have become known as "the cloud" — an info-sphere that is both everywhere and, for that same reason, no place exactly...

### ProPublica Writer Wins Pulitzer

[Note from Editor: We often use ProPublica articles freely because that news wire was created for the public, not to benefit corporations.]

ProPublica reporter Sheri Fink has been honored with a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting for an article published last August in the *New York Times Magazine*. In addition, reporting by Charles Ornstein and Tracy Weber of ProPublica on lax oversight of nursing in California, published in the *Los Angeles Times*, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, the Pulitzer's highest honor.

Sheri Fink's shocking 13,000-word chronicle, "The Deadly Choices at Memorial," revealed how some New Orleans doctors — in the gathering chaos as Katrina's flood waters rose, generators failed and their hospital was cut off from the world — decided to give lethal injections to patients whom they feared could not be evacuated.

Sheri's work is a powerful example of what ProPublica was founded to do: shine light on possible abuses of power or failures

to uphold the public interest, so that the public can learn from and remedy them. In this case, her reporting provides crucial information for those charged with designing guidelines for coping with medical disasters. The key questions are who should be saved first and who should die.

This prestigious award caps a series of honors voted for ProPublica's work in 2009, its first year of operation with a complete staff. They include a George Polk Award, the Selden Ring Award for investigative reporting and two Investigative Reporters and Editors awards for subjects as diverse as environmental risks from natural gas drilling, denial of government-mandated insurance benefits for dead or wounded employees of military contractors abroad and police shootings in New Orleans...



Courtesy U.S. National Security Administration  
Designed in 1961, the B61 is the primary nuclear weapon in the U.S. stockpile.

## U.S. and Russia Agree to Slash Nuclear Arsenals

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 26, 2010 (ENS) — The ultimate environmental threat — that of nuclear war — was reduced today. The presidents of the United States and Russia have agreed on the terms of a new nuclear disarmament treaty that cuts each side's arsenal of warheads by 30 percent to the lowest levels in more than 50 years.

President Barack Obama and President Dmitry Medvedev finalized the pact today by phone and were to meet in Prague, Czech Republic on April 8th to sign a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) that limits to 1,550 the number of warheads each side may have.

Prague was selected for the signing ceremony because it was there last April that President Obama first stated his vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

Today, the Kremlin said in a statement as they move toward greater disarmament, "Both nations see their ultimate goal as creating a world without nuclear weapons."

President Obama said today at the White House, "After a year of intense negotiations, the United States and Russia have agreed to the most comprehensive arms control agreement in nearly two decades."

"Since taking office, one of my highest priorities has been addressing the threat posed by nuclear weapons to the American people," he said. "And that's why, last April in Prague, I stated America's intention to pursue the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, a goal that's been embraced by Presidents like John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan."

"While this aspiration will not be reached in the near future, I put forward a comprehensive agenda to pursue it — to stop the spread of these weapons; to secure vulnerable nuclear materials from terrorists and to reduce nuclear arsenals," President Obama said. "A fundamental part of that effort was the negotiation of a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia."

The new 10-year agreement will replace the START Treaty of 1991 which expired on December 4, 2009. The START treaty entered into force on December 5, 1994 for 15 years and became the first Russian-U.S. treaty that not only restricted the arms race but envisaged the real reduction of the already accrued arsenals of strategic nuclear weapons.

The new START agreement also replaces the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty, known as the Moscow Treaty, of May 24, 2002, in which President George W. Bush negotiated further weapons reductions.

President Medvedev said today at the Kremlin that the draft treaty "reflects the balance of interests on both sides."

The Russian president noted that, "Though the negotiation process was not always easy, the negotiators' constructive mindset made it possible to achieve a tremendous result in a short time and produce a document ready for signature."

Once the two presidents have signed the document, the main task will be for their respective countries to ratify the new treaty, they said.

If ratified by both governments, the new START treaty will allow 700 deployed inter-

continental ballistic missiles, ICBMs, deployed submarine-launched ballistic missiles, SLBMs and deployed heavy bombers — numbers more than two times lower than the levels allowed in the previous START treaty.

The new START treaty will also allow each side 800 deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers and heavy bombers.

The new START treaty also provides that each party has the right to independently determine the composition and structure of its strategic offensive arms.

The Treaty has a verification regime that combines elements of the 1991 START Treaty with new elements. Measures include on-site inspections and exhibitions, data exchanges and notifications related to strategic offensive arms and facilities covered by the treaty, and provisions to facilitate the use of national technical means for treaty monitoring.

To increase confidence and transparency, the Treaty also provides for the exchange of telemetry. The two presidents agreed that the new treaty marks a transition in the two nations' interactions to a higher level in developing new strategic relations and will serve as evidence of the commitment by Russia and the United States, the world's largest nuclear powers, to reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals in accordance with the spirit and letter of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The input of the new treaty to strengthening nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament should also increase trust, not merely between its parties, but more broadly among nuclear and non-nuclear NPT member-states, the Kremlin said in a statement.

On Capitol Hill, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat said he will carefully review the treaty in preparation for ratification hearings.

"After this treaty is submitted to the Senate, the Armed Services Committee will hold hearings on the national security aspects of the treaty and how it will be implemented," Levin said. "I congratulate both presidents for carrying through on their commitment to arms control."

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton, a Missouri Democrat, said, "I view this agreement as a positive development that should benefit U.S., Russian and global security as whole. The agreement will send a clear message to the world and should assist President Obama in his efforts to impose stiffer punishments on nations accused of violating the Non-Proliferation Treaty when he meets with that treaty's signatory nations in May."

The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, a U.S. network of three-dozen grassroots and national groups representing communities near U.S. nuclear weapons sites, applauded the new START treaty.

Calling it "a positive step for U.S. nuclear policy" that "reinvigorates the international effort to eliminate the threat posed by nuclear weapons," the Alliance said it supports "prompt Senate ratification of the New START agreement without conditions that will undermine prospects for further reductions."



## How to Fight Hate in Your Community

By Don Hazen  
AlterNet, April 6, 2010

We are all aware of how nasty and uncivil our society has become. The election of a Black president and successful health care legislation have driven hate radio and conservative officials over the edge, fueling an atmosphere of intolerance that has many of us feeling tense. Large segments of the population are thinking and expecting the worst. There is a gaping political divide and, as the racial and ethnic makeup of the country changes, some feel desperate for a past that is long gone and in many ways never really existed.

There have been racial attacks, bricks thrown through windows and death threats. Recently, militia members reportedly planning to murder cops were arrested. The scary news encourages paranoia and hysteria which, while understandable, nevertheless add fuel to the fire. However, increasingly there are some effective tools we can all use to fight back against hate.

You may have heard about the tragic death of Ecuadorian immigrant Marcelo Lucero. He was stabbed to death in Patchogue, Long Island by a group of high school students out looking for Hispanic immigrants to beat up. The murder trial is currently underway. The good news is how the community has responded to raise consciousness and support Marcelo's family.

America has a long history of intolerance. For many, the memory of Timothy McVeigh backing a truck filled with fertilizer and diesel fuel into the Oklahoma City Federal Building and killing 168 people, is still fresh.

More recently, in 2008, two people were killed in Knoxville, Tennessee when a man burst into a Unitarian Church during a youth performance and opened fire with a 12-gauge shotgun. The killer admitted his attack was a hate crime and that he targeted the church because he'd been told Unitarians were liberals and they "supported gays."

But the response was swift and clear — the Knoxville Unitarians did not stand alone. Immediately following the shooting, the city's religious community, elected officials and faith leaders from around the country rallied around the besieged congregation. They may not have shared the same values but they passionately believed in the church's right to worship in safety and security.

### The Positive, Untold Story

While there is far more hate and intolerance than we wish, the untold story is that many communities have acted to prevent escalation in the face of conflict and others have responded to tragedy in exemplary ways, making it clear that hate won't be

tolerated. These communities know full well that the only way to attack hate is to act together and to move quickly. For without vigilance, the haters can get a foothold.

Around the country there is a gathering movement of people who are not waiting for hate crimes to happen but are taking steps to make their communities feel safe. The challenge is finding a way to do it — and meeting others who are ready to stand with them. Part of the under-the-radar success of staving off violence comes from a successful model of organizing called "Not in Our Town."

Not In Our Town (NIOT) is based on the belief that when ordinary people unite to take action in the face of hate and intolerance, it sends a powerful message to the whole country. Many individuals have influential community tentacles in cities and towns across the country. Right now, we need their voices to clearly send the message: **No Hate, No Fear, No Violence: Not In Our Town.**

The project takes its name from Not in Our Town, the 1995 PBS documentary produced by Bay Area filmmakers Patrice O'Neill and Rhian Miller about the residents of Billings, Montana who stood together in the face of hate violence that rocked their small community.

Today, the project enters an exciting new phase with the creation of NIOT.org, which allows people and communities around the globe to connect, share ideas and model best practices for building safe, inclusive communities. The new interactive Web site features Web 2.0 functionality, including mapping, video and film and active blogs.

So whenever you hear about tension building, community conflict emerging, racism, hate language or threats of violence, send people to NIOT.org, to get help and be in touch with thousands of others who have come before.

As a great example of Not In Our Town in action, students at Gunn High School in the San Francisco Bay area responded positively when well-known hate-monger Fred Phelps, of the Kansas Westboro Baptist Church, brought his anti-gay hate message to a picket line outside the school. In a few days more than 100,000 people had viewed the video.

"Not In Our Town is especially inspiring," says Paul Sheridan, assistant attorney general for West Virginia, "because the people involved are ordinary people and the actions they took are the types of things any of us could and should do."

Don Hazen is the executive editor of AlterNet and a board member of the Working Group, which sponsors Not In Our Town.

## SOLDIERS SPEAK OUT

Kasper and Trent of the Empowerment Project have produced the most persuasive collection of U. S. military combat veterans' comments on war and why they now oppose it. If you want to know what Iraq war vets think about their tours of duty or want to convince someone who is considering military service to rethink his (or her) position, show them Soldiers Speak Out.



\$15 DVD — 178 Minutes From Idaho Observer  
P.O. Box 457, Spirit Lake, Idaho 83869; 208-255-2307



# The Nanotech Gamble: Bold Science, Big Money, Growing Risks

## Special Report

Submitted by Alison Boteler  
First in a Three-Part Series  
Let us know if you want more.

By Andrew Schneider  
AOLNews.com

March 24, 2010 — For almost two years, molecular biologist Bénédicte Trouiller doused the drinking water of scores of lab mice with nano-titanium dioxide, the most common nanomaterial used in consumer products today.

She knew that earlier studies conducted in test tubes and petri dishes had shown the same particle could cause disease. But her tests at a lab at UCLA's School of Public Health were in vivo — conducted in living organisms — and thus regarded by some scientists as more relevant in assessing potential human harm.

Halfway through, Trouiller became alarmed: Consuming the nano-titanium dioxide was damaging or destroying the animals' DNA and chromosomes. The biological havoc continued as she repeated the studies again and again.

It was a significant finding: The degrees of DNA damage and genetic instability that the 32-year-old investigator documented can be "linked to all the big killers of man, namely cancer, heart disease, neurological disease and aging," says Professor Robert Schiestl, a genetic toxicologist who ran the lab at UCLA's School of Public Health where Trouiller did her research.

Nano-titanium dioxide is so pervasive that the Environmental Working Group says it has calculated that close to 10,000 over-the-counter products use it in one form or another. Other public health specialists put the number even higher. It's "in everything from medicine capsules and nutritional supplements to food icing and additives to skin creams, oils and toothpaste," Schiestl says. He adds that at least two million pounds of nanosized titanium dioxide are produced and used in the U.S. each year.

What's more, the particles Trouiller gave the mice to drink are just one of an endless number of engineered, atom-size structures that have been or can be made. And a number of those nanomaterials have also been shown in published, peer-reviewed studies (more than 170 from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health alone) to potentially cause harm as well. Researchers have found, for instance, that carbon nanotubes — widely used in many industrial applications — can penetrate the lungs more deeply than asbestos and appear to cause asbestos-like, often-fatal damage more rapidly. Other nanoparticles, especially those composed of metal-chemical combinations, can cause cancer and birth defects; lead to harmful buildups in the circulatory system and damage the heart, liver and other organs of lab animals.

Yet despite those findings, most federal agencies are doing little to nothing to ensure public safety. Consumers have virtually no way of knowing whether the products they purchase contain nanomaterials, as under current U.S. laws, it is completely up to manufacturers what to put on their labels. And hundreds of interviews conducted by AOL News' senior public health correspondent over the past 15 months make it clear that movement in the government's efforts to institute safety rules and regulations for use of nanomaterials is often as flat as the read-out on a snowman's heart monitor.

"How long should the public have to wait before the government takes protective action?" says Jaydee Hanson, senior policy analyst for the Center for Food Safety. "Must the bodies stack up first?"

## Big Promise Comes With Potential Perils

"Nano" comes from the Greek word for dwarf, though that falls

short of conveying the true scale of this new world: Draw a line 1 inch long, and 25 million nanoparticles can fit between its beginning and end.

Apart from the materials' size, everything about nanotechnology is huge. According to the federal government and investment analysts, more than 1,300 U.S. businesses and universities are involved in related research and development. The National Science Foundation says that \$60 billion to \$70 billion of nano-containing products are sold in this country annually, with the majority going to the energy and electronics industries.

Both the promise and the potential peril of nanomaterials come from their staggeringly small size, which is highlighted by the chart at the right. (Note, for example, how it shows that the periods on this page are equal to 1 million nanometers.)

Despite the speed bump of the recession, a global market for nano-containing products that stood at \$254 billion in 2005 is projected to grow to \$2.5 trillion over the next four years, says Michael Holman, research director of Boston-based Lux Research. Another projection, this one from National Science Foundation senior nanotechnology adviser, Mihail Roco, says that nanotech will create at least 1 million jobs worldwide by 2015.

By deconstructing and then reassembling atoms into previously unknown material — the delicate process at the heart of nanotechnology — scientists have achieved medical advancements that even staunch critics admit are miraculous. Think of a medical smart bomb: payloads of cancer-fighting drugs loaded into nanoscale delivery systems and targeted against a specific tumor.

Carbon nanotubes, rod-shaped and rigid with a strength that surpasses steel at a mere fraction of the weight, were touted by commentators at the Vancouver Olympics as helmets, skis and bobsleds made from nanocomposites flashed by. Those innovations follow ultralight bicycles used in the Tour de France, longer-lasting tennis balls and golf balls touted to fly straighter and roll farther.

Food scientists, meanwhile, are almost gleeful over the ability to create nanostructures that can enhance food's flavor, shelf life and appearance — and to one day potentially use the engineered particles to craft food without ever involving a farm or ranch.

Yet for all the technology's promise and relentless progress, major questions remain about nanomaterials' effects on human health. A bumper sticker spotted near the sprawling Food and Drug Administration complex in Rockville, Maryland, puts it well: "Nanotech — wondrous, horrendous and unknown."

Adds Jim Alwood, nanotechnology coordinator in the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics: "There is so much uncertainty about the questions of safety. We can't tell you how safe or unsafe nanomaterials are. There is just too much that we don't yet know."

## What is Known is Fascinating and Sobering

The carbon nanotubes in the vial above are part of a booming industry. According to one consulting firm, the global market for nano-containing products is projected to grow to \$2.5 trillion by 2014.

Nanoparticles can heal but they can also kill. Thanks to their size, researchers have found they can enter the body by almost every pathway. They can be inhaled, ingested, absorbed through skin and eyes. They can invade the brain through the olfactory nerves in the nose.

After penetrating the body, nanoparticles can enter cells, move from organ to organ and even cross the protective blood-brain barrier. They can also get into the bloodstream, bone marrow, nerves, ovaries, muscles and

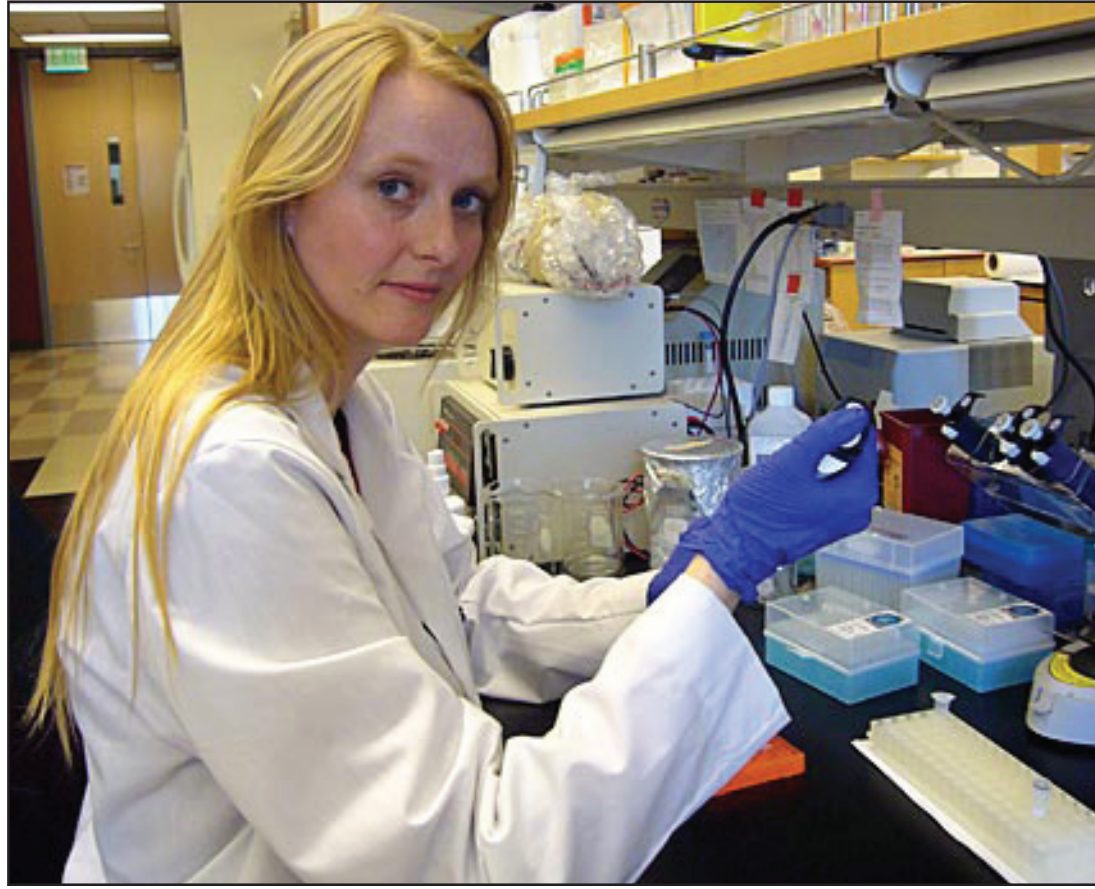


Photo Courtesy Bénédicte Trouiller  
UCLA molecular biologist Bénédicte Trouiller found that nano-titanium dioxide — the nanomaterial most commonly used in consumer products today — can damage or destroy DNA and chromosomes at degrees that can be linked to "all the big killers of man," a colleague says.

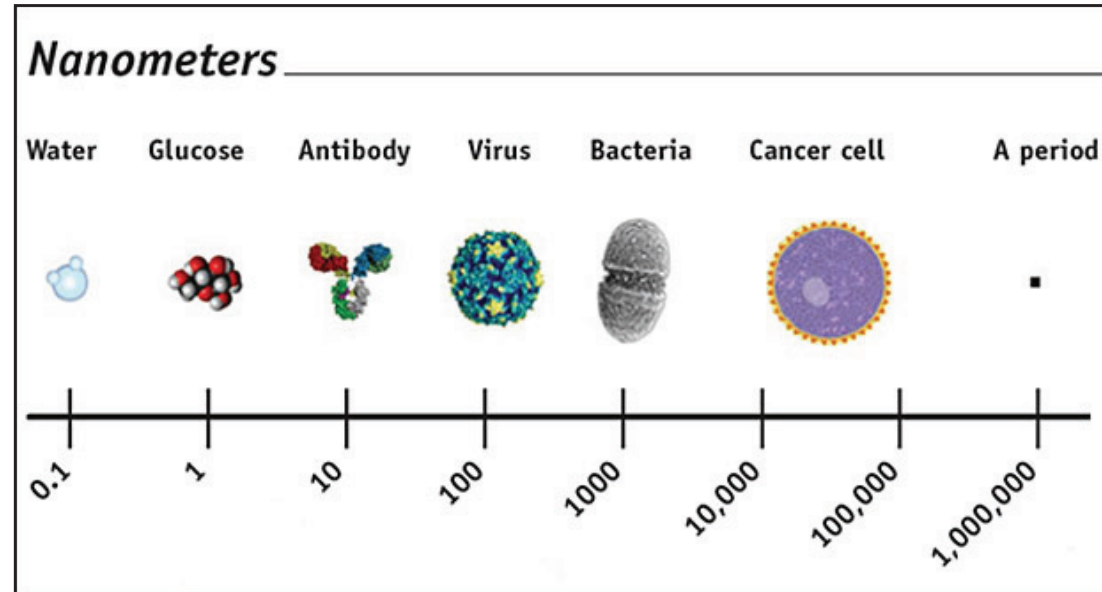


Photo Courtesy FDA.gov  
Both the promise and the potential peril of nanomaterials come from their staggeringly small size, which is highlighted by the chart above. (Note, for example, how it shows that the periods on this page are equal to 1 million nanometers.)



(above) The carbon nanotubes in this vial are part of a booming industry. Nanoparticles can heal but they can also kill. Photo Courtesy Nanotechnology Project  
(right) FDA doesn't even pretend to evaluate nanoparticles in thousands of cosmetics, facial products or food supplements, etc. Photo from Corbis



lymph nodes.

The toxicity of a specific nanoparticle depends, in part, on its shape and chemical composition. Many are shaped roughly like a soccer ball with multiple panels that can increase reactivity, thus exacerbating their potential hazards.

Some nanoparticles can cause a condition called oxidative stress, which can inflame and eventually kill cells. A potential blessing in controlled clinical applications, this ability also carries potentially disastrous consequences.

"Scientists have engineered nanoparticles to target some types of cancer cells and this is truly wonderful," says Dr. Michael Harbut, director of the Environmental Cancer Initiative at Michigan's Karmanos Cancer Institute. "But until we have sufficient knowledge of, and experience with, this 21<sup>st</sup> century version of the surgical scalpel, we run a very real risk of simultaneously destroying healthy cells."

When incorporated into food products, nanomaterials raise other troubling vagaries. In a report issued in January, the science committee of the British House of Lords, following a lengthy review, concluded that

there was too little research looking at the toxicological impact of eating nanomaterials. The committee recommended that such "products will simply be denied regulatory approval until further information is available" and also raised the concern that, while the amount of nanomaterial in food may be small, the particles can accumulate from repeated consumption.

"It is chronic exposure to nanomaterials that is arguably more relevant to food science applications," says Bernadene Magnuson, a food scientist and toxicologist with Cantox Health Sciences International. "Prolonged exposure studies must be conducted."

Given the potential hazards, public health advocates are calling for greater restraint on the part of those rushing nano-products to market. "The danger is there today in the hundreds of nano-containing consumer products being sold," says Jennifer Sass, senior scientist and nano expert for the nonpartisan Natural Resources Defense Council. "Things that are in the nanoscale that are intentionally designed to be put into consumer products should be instantly required to be tested and, until proper risk

assessments are done, they shouldn't be allowed to be sold."

David Hobson, chief scientific officer for international risk assessment firm NanoTox, adds that the questions raised by the growing body of research "are significant enough that we should begin to be concerned. We should not wait until we see visible health effects in humans before we take steps to protect ourselves or to redesign these particles so that they're safer."

Hobson says that when he talks to university and industry nano scientists, he sometimes feels as if he's talking with Marie Curie when she first was playing around with radium.

"It's an exciting advancement they're working with," he says. "But no one even thinks that it could be harmful."

## Why Size Matters

At a week-long Knight Foundation Science Workshop on nanotechnology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology last June, five professors — four from the Cambridge school and one from Cornell University — dazzled their fellow participants with extensive show-and-tells on the amazing innovations coming

out of their labs.

At one point, one played a video of a mouse with a severed spine dragging his lifeless rear legs around his cage. A scaffold made of nanomaterial was later implanted across the mouse's injury. Further footage showed the same rodent, 100 days later, racing around his enclosure, all four legs churning like mad.

When the five nanotech pioneers were asked about hazards from the particles they were creating, only one said she was watching new health studies closely. The others said size had no impact on risk: no problems were expected, since the same chemicals they had nano-sized had been used safely for years.

It's an argument echoed by researchers and nano-manufacturers around the globe. But those assumptions are challenged by the many research efforts presenting strong evidence to the contrary, among them Trouiller's study, which was published in November.

"The difference in size is vital to understanding the risk from the same chemical," says Schiestl, who was a co-author on the UCLA study. "Titanium dioxide is chemically inert and has been safely used in the body for decades for joint replacements and other surgical applications but, when the very same chemical is nanosized, it can cause illness and lead to death."

## Regulators Take a 'Wait-and-See' Approach

Many public health groups and environmental activists fear the government's lethargy on nanotechnology will be a repeat of earlier regulatory snafus where deadly errors were made in assessing the risk of new substances. "The unsettling track record of other technological breakthroughs — like asbestos, DDT, PCBs and radiation — should give regulators pause as they consider the growing commercial presence of nanotech products," says Patty Lovera, assistant director of Food & Water Watch. "This wait-and-see approach puts consumers and the environment at risk."

While the agency has many critics, the EPA, for its part, is pursuing an aggressive strategy on nanotechnology. Among nano-titanium dioxide's other uses, the particle is deployed as an agent for removing arsenic from drinking water, and last year, the EPA handed out 500-page books of health studies on the particles to a panel of scientists asked to advise the agency on the possible risk of that practice. (Another EPA science advisory board held hearings into the hazards from nanosilver used in pants, socks and underwear to teething rings.)

Dr. Jesse Goodman, the FDA's chief scientist and deputy commissioner for science and public health, says that "there is a most definite requirement that manufacturers ensure that the products be safe." But he adds that compliance is essentially voluntary. The FDA takes action only after an unsafe product is reported.

The Food and Drug Administration's handling of nano-titanium dioxide provides a more emblematic example of the government's overall approach. Public health advocates and some of the FDA's own risk assessors are frustrated by what they perceive as the agency's "don't look, don't tell" philosophy. The FDA doesn't even make a pretense of evaluating nanoparticles in the thousands of cosmetics, facial products or food supplements that have already flooded the market, even those that boast the presence of engineered particles. Nano Gold Energizing Cream (\$420 a jar) and Cyclic nano-cleanser (\$80 a bar) are among the many similar products unevaluated by the agency.

Goodman says the exclusion of cosmetics and nutritional supplements from its regulations is what Congress wants. Goodman adds that "there is a most definite

Continued on page 12



# Views

## Silence

Submitted by Kim Stenley

By John Zerzan, Johnzerzan.net

Silence used to be, to varying degrees, a means of isolation. Now it is the absence of silence that works to render today's world empty and isolating. Its reserves have been invaded and depleted. The Machine marches globally forward and silence is the dwindling place where noise has not yet penetrated.

Civilization is a conspiracy of noise, designed to cover up the uncomfortable silences. The silence-honoring Wittgenstein understood the loss of our relationship with it. The unsilent present is a time of evaporating attention spans, erosion of critical thinking and a lessened capacity for deeply felt experiences. Silence, like darkness, is hard to come by but mind and spirit need its sustenance.

Certainly there are many and varied sides to silence. There are imposed or voluntary silences of fear, grief, conformity, complicity (e.g. the AIDS-awareness "Silence=Death" formulation), which are often interrelated states. And nature has been progressively silenced, as documented in Rachel Carson's prophetic *Silent Spring*. Nature cannot be definitively silenced, however, which perhaps goes a long way in explaining why some feel it must be destroyed. "There has been a silencing of nature, including our own nature," concluded Martin Heidegger, and we need to let this silence, as silence, speak. It still does so often, after all, speak louder than words.

There will be no liberation of humans without the resurrection of the natural world and silence is very pertinent to this assertion. The great silence of the universe engenders a silent awe, which the Roman Lucretius meditated upon in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE: "First of all, contemplate the clear, pure color of the sky and all it contains within it: the stars wandering everywhere, the moon, the sun and its light with its incomparable brilliance. If all these objects appeared to mortals today for the first time, if they appeared to their eyes suddenly and unexpectedly, what could one cite that would be more marvelous than this totality and whose existence man's imagination would less have dared to conceive?"

Down to earth, nature is filled with silences. The alternation of the seasons is the rhythm of silence; at night silence descends over the planet, though much less so now. The parts of nature resemble great reserves of silence. Max Picard's description is almost a poem: "The forest is like a great reservoir of silence out of which the silence trickles in a thin, slow stream and fills the air with its brightness. The mountain, the lake, the fields, the sky — they all seem to be waiting for a sign to empty their silence onto the things of noise in the cities of men."

Silence is "not the mere absence of something else." In fact, our longings turn toward that dimension, its associations and implications. Behind the appeal for silence lies the wish for a perceptual and cultural new beginning.

Zen teaches that "silence never varies...." But our focus may be improved if we turn away from the universalizing placelessness of late modernity. Silence is no doubt culturally specific and is thus experienced variously. Nevertheless, as Picard argues, it can confront us with the "original beginnings of all things" and presents objects to us directly and immediately. Silence is primary, summoning presence to itself; so it's a connection to the realm of origin.

In the industrially-based technosphere, the Machine has almost succeeded in banishing quietude. A natural history of silence is needed for this endangered species. Modernity deafens. The noise, like technology, must never retreat — and never does.

For Picard, nothing has changed human character so much as the loss of silence. Thoreau called silence "our inviolable asylum," an indispensable refuge that must be defended. Silence is necessary against the mounting sound. It's feared by manipulative mass culture, from which it remains apart, a means

of resistance precisely because it does not belong to this world. Many things can still be heard against the background of silence; thus a way is opened, a way for autonomy and imagining.

"Sense opens up in silence," wrote Jean-Luc Nancy. It is to be approached and experienced bodily, inseparably from the world, in the silent core of the self. It can highlight our embodiment, a qualitative step away from the hallmark machines that work so resolutely to disembody us. Silence can be a great aid in unblocking ourselves from the prevailing, addictive information sickness at loose in society. It offers us the place to be present to ourselves, to come to grips with who we are. Present to the real depth of the world in an increasingly thin, flattened technoscape.

The record of philosophy vis-a-vis silence is generally dismal, as good a gauge as any to its overall failure. Socrates judged silence to be a realm of non-sense, while Aristotle claimed that being silent caused flatulence. At the same time, however, Raoul Mortley could see a "growing dissatisfaction with the use of words," "an enormous increase in the language of silence" in classical Greece.

Much later, Pascal was terrified by the "silence of the universe" and Hegel clearly felt that what could not be spoken was simply the untrue, that silence was a deficiency to be overcome. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche both emphasized the prerequisite value of solitude, diverging from anti-silence Hegel, among others.

Deservedly well known is a commentary on Odysseus and the Sirens (from Homer's *Odyssey*) by Horkheimer and Adorno. They depict the Sirens' effort to sidetrack Odysseus from his journey as that of Eros trying to stay the forces of repressive civilization. Kafka felt that silence would have been a more irresistible means than singing.

"Phenomenology begins in silence," according to Herbert Spiegelberg. To put phenomena or objects somehow first, before ideational constructions, was its founding notion. Or as Heidegger had it, there is a thinking deeper and more rigorous than the conceptual and part of this involves a primordial link between silence and understanding. Postmodernism, and Derrida in particular, deny the widespread awareness of the inadequacy of language, asserting that gaps of silence in discourse, for example, are barriers to meaning and power. In fact, Derrida strongly castigates "the violence of primitive and pre-logical silence," denouncing silence as a nihilist enemy of thought. Such strenuous antipathy demonstrates Derrida's deafness to presence and grace and the threat silence poses to someone for whom the symbolic is everything. Wittgenstein understood that something pervades everything sayable, something which is itself unsayable. This is the sense of his well-known last line of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: "Of that which one cannot speak, one should remain silent."

Can silence be considered, approached, without reification, in the here and now? I think it can be an open, strengthening way of knowing, a generative condition. Silence can also be a dimension of fear, grief — even of madness and suicide. In fact, it is quite difficult to reify silence, to freeze it into any one non-living thing. At times the reality we interrogate is mute, an index of the depth of the still present silence. Wonder may be the question that best gives answers, silently and deeply.

"Silence is so accurate," said Mark Rothko, a line that has intrigued me for years. Too often we disrupt silence, only to voice some detail that misses an overall sense of what we are part of, and how many ways there are to destroy it. In the Antarctica winter of 1933, Richard Byrd recorded: "Took my daily walk at 4PM... I paused to listen to the silence...the day was dying, the night being born — but with great peace. Here were imponderable processes and forces of the cosmos, harmonious and soundless."

How much is revealed in silence through the depths and

mysteries of living nature. Annie Dillard also provides a fine response to the din: "At a certain point you say to the woods, to the sea, to the mountains, to the world, 'Now I am ready. Now I will stop and be wholly attentive.' You empty yourself and wait, listening."

It is not only the natural world that is accessible via silence. Cioran indicated the secrets in the silence of things, deciding that, "All objects have a language which we can decipher only in total silence." David Michael Levin's *The Body's Recollection of Being* counsels us to "learn to think through the body...we should listen in silence to our bodily felt experience." And in the interpersonal sphere, silence is a result of empathy and being understood, without words much more profoundly than otherwise.

Native Americans seem to have always placed great value on silence and direct experience and, in indigenous cultures in general, silence denotes respect and self-effacement. It is at the core of the Vision Quest, the solitary period of fasting and closeness to the Earth to discover one's life path and purpose.

Inuit Norman Hallendy assigns more insight to the silent state of awareness called *inu-inuqtuk* than to dreaming. Native healers very often stress silence as an aid to serenity and hope, while stillness is required for success in the hunt. These needs for attentiveness and quiet may well have been key sources of indigenous appreciation of silence.

Silence reaches back to presence and original community, before the symbolic compromised both silence and presence. It predates what Levinas called "the unity of representation," that always works to silence the silence and replace it with the homelessness of symbolic structures. The Latin root for silence, *silere*, to say nothing, is related to *sinere*, to allow to be in a place. We are drawn to those places where language falls most often and, most crucially, silent.

The later Heidegger appreciated the realm of silence, as did Holderlin, one of Heidegger's important reference points, especially in his Late Hymns. The insatiable longing that Holderlin expressed so powerfully related not only to an original, silent wholeness but also to his growing comprehension that language must always admit its origin in loss.

A century and a half later, Samuel Beckett made use of silence as an alternative to language. In *Krapp's Last Tape* and elsewhere, the idea that all language is an excess of language is strongly on offer. Beckett complains that "in the forest of symbols" there is never quiet, and longs to break through the veil of language to silence. Northrup Frye found the purpose of Beckett's work "to lie in nothing other than the restoration of silence."

Our most embodied, alive-to-this-Earth selves realize best the limits of language and, indeed, the failure of the project of representation. In this state it is easiest to understand the exhaustion of language and the fact that we are always a word's

length from immediacy. Kafka commented on this in "In the Penal Colony," where the printing press doubled as an instrument of torture. For Thoreau, "as the truest society approaches always nearer to solitude, so the most excellent speech finally falls into silence." Conversely, mass society banishes the chance of autonomy, just as it forecloses on silence.

Holderlin imagined that language draws us into time but it is silence that holds out against it. Time increases in silence; it appears not to flow, but to abide. Various temporalities seem close to losing their barriers — past, present, future less divided. But silence is a variable fabric, not a uniformity or an abstraction. Its quality is never far from its context, just as it is the field of the non-mediated. Unlike time, which has for so long been a measure of estrangement, silence cannot be spatialized or converted into a medium of exchange. This is why it can be a refuge from time's incessancy. Gurnemanz, near the opening of Wagner's *Parsifal*, sings, "Here time becomes space." Silence avoids this primary dynamic of domination.

So here we are, with the Machine engulfing us in its various assaults on silence and so much else, intruding deeply. The note North Americans spontaneously hum or sing is B-natural, which is the corresponding tone of our 60 cycles per second alternating current electricity. (In Europe, G-sharp is "naturally" sung, matching that continent's 50 cycles per second AC electricity.) In the globalizing, homogenizing Noise Zone we may soon be further harmonized. Pico Ayer refers to "my growing sense of a world that's singing the same song in a hundred accents all at once."

We need a refusal of the roar of standardization, its information-noise and harried, surface "communication" modes. A "No" to the unrelenting, colonizing penetrability of non-silence, pushing into every non-place. The rising racket measures, by decibel up-ticks and its polluting reach, the degrading mass world — Don DeLillo's *White Noise*.

Silence is a rebuke to all this and a zone for reconstituting ourselves. It gathers in nature and can help us gather ourselves for the battles that will end debasement. Silence as a powerful tool of resistance, the unheard note that might precede insurrection. It was, for example, what slave masters feared most. In various Asian spiritual traditions, the muni, vowed to silence, is the person of greatest capacity and independence — the one who does not need a master for enlightenment.

The deepest passions are nurtured in silent ways and depths. How else is respect for the dead most signally expressed, intense love best transmitted, our profoundest thoughts and visions experienced, the unspoiled world most directly savored?

In this grief-stricken world, according to Max Horkheimer, we "become more innocent" through grief. And perhaps more open to silence — as comfort, ally and stronghold.



### Dancing the Heart of the Spiral

By Sally Klein

**In the heart of a spiral comes a tribe  
Dancing in a circle of Stones.  
Spinning energy under the stars.  
Dissolving veils that cloud awareness.**

**Whispers call from the other side  
As ancestor voices join the songs.  
Drumbeats shake resistance away  
Creating space for new beginnings.**

**Questing opens cracks of mind.  
Each heart finding the way.  
Action follows words of magic.  
Many walk as one within the spiral.**

**One candle alone wavers in the wind,  
Many together light the way.  
Tribes sharing paths forge lasting bonds.  
A never ending spiral dance.**

*Author's Note: Dedicated to Spiralheart and Four Quarters co-creating community and magic, July 2009.*

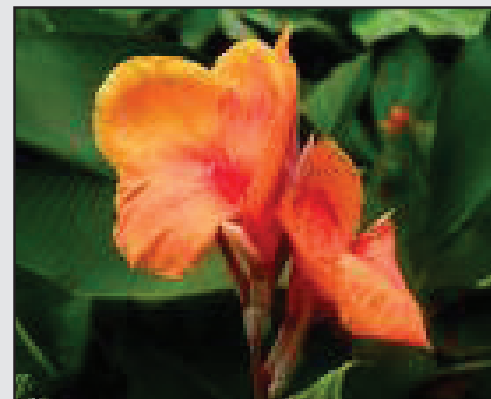


Photo by tropicaldesigns.com  
*Orange canna lily.*

canna lilies incubate in the dry season in Nepal, among the goats' dung — and during the rains their great orange flowers wave softly above our garden's brick walls to be eaten by clambering, young goats — how can we not love dung, energy and beauty

*Note from Sandy: The leaves are large and edible — at least by goats — and the plant is tall, possibly five feet, easily reaching above low walls. I remember a clean, summertime smell to them. The goats didn't smell so nice but they could jump high!*

By Sandy Chilcote  
Newfoundland, Canada

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*Earth Psalms: Song 18*

By Angela Magara ©  
www.angelamagara.com

*Love is my strength.  
It is the rock that is my anchor, my home, my shelter,  
my steadfast friend, my respite.  
I call to Love when in danger,  
I rely on Love in the time of death;  
In distress Love rises to my lips.*

*Hurricanes rage, tornadoes destroy,  
The sea rises like a mountain  
and the mountains shake and fall like waves;  
The dark and the light dance and sparkle as  
Stars leap across time to the rhythm of Love.  
Lightening and rivers kiss in passion, tongues touching,  
At the call of Love.*

*Love is my strength.  
She has tucked me in the down of her wing,  
Fed me a merciful harvest.  
Comfort to my body,  
balm for my soul,  
answer to my longing,  
release for my spirit,  
is the whisper of Love.*

*Love is my strength.  
The fire in my blood,  
Bow and shield, sword and helmet,  
armor forged from justice,  
Tempered with compassion, is Love.*

*Love is my strong arm, my fearless voice.  
My set will, my broken heart,  
My deep truth, my hasty choice,  
All this is love.*

*The strength of love is the sound of the bell slicing into time.  
The sweetness of love is the juice that drips without biding.  
The magic of love is its faithfulness;  
when I reach for Love, her face always turns to mine.*

*Love is the substance of this world;  
It is my fiber, our weave, the web.  
Let Love wrap this world in tangles  
And capture us in Joy  
that we may all live until we die.*

*Earth Psalms* is full of familiar words spoken in a new voice based on the Biblical Psalms but with the heart of Earth-based spirituality. Printed with the author's permission.

## Environmentalists Make Plea for Desert Preservation

A group of environmentalists says renewable energy goal shouldn't come with destruction of native plant, animal life.

Submitted by Bill Boteler

By Stephanie Tavares  
The Las Vegas Sun, March 23, 2010



Photo By Flickr User Selvig

One in every six tortoises moved would die, according to the environmental impact statement for huge solar plants in the pristine, Southwest desert.

Some environmentalists are breaking ranks and fighting the solar industry.

The problem, as they see it, is that tens of thousands of acres of mostly pristine desert is slated for bulldozing to accommodate utility-scale solar power plants in Nevada and across the Southwest.

The solar plant planned 4.5 miles southwest of the Primm Golf Course, for example, will eat up about 3,400 acres. About 20 people hiked across several miles of that desert Saturday.

They're members of the Sierra Club, the Center for Biological Diversity, the Western Watersheds Project and Basin and Range Watch, but last weekend they were acting independently of their organizations. The hike was a form of protest. The mission was to gather information about rare and endangered plants and animals that live on the proposed site of the solar plant. The hikers' plan is to use their knowledge of life on the site to block the development or at least force it to move.

Renewable energy developers have long been the darlings of environmental groups but Saturday's event highlights a growing rift within those groups. It's not that the dissenters are anti-solar or anti-wind power. They simply want it to come in a form known as "distributed generation," meaning rooftop solar panels and backyard wind turbines instead of massive new power plants and new transmission lines.

"I don't understand why so much emphasis has to be put on these gigantic projects that are taking up wild open space," hiker Laura Cunningham of Beatty says. "Reducing electricity consumption even a tiny bit and deploying urban technologies like rooftop solar first, before we start bringing out the bulldozers, would be better for everyone."

Distributed generation requires no wilderness bulldozing, kills no animals and requires no massive infrastructure changes. It also has a smaller carbon footprint, according to RA Energie founder Herve Mazzocco, who has worked on renewable energy projects large and small.

Large utility-scale projects have larger carbon footprints for a number of reasons, Mazzocco says. They tend to be built in remote locations and have to be huge in part because some of the electricity they generate is lost as the power is transported hundreds of miles along transmission lines. Adding to the carbon tally: Components are shipped from halfway around the world,

and bulldozers and other equipment used to develop the land are polluters.

"Distributed generation systems can still be designed so the solar production coincides with the peak demand, which will save the utilities from running carbon intensive peak plants, there are no transmission losses as the energy is used on-site and, perhaps more significantly, there is no need for long environmental review processes, which means jobs right now, not in a year," Mazzocco says.

A new workforce would be needed to manufacture and install the technology.

The government is pouring gargantuan subsidies into utility-scale renewable energy development. If it were to put that same kind of support into programs to help homeowners buy wholesale-cost solar panels and backyard wind turbines, it would preserve land and save tax dollars. Residents wouldn't have to pay the added expense of funding huge renewable energy plants through increased electricity rates, advocates say.

But some say this corner of the renewable energy industry has been overlooked by the feds and state governments in favor of flashier utility-scale projects pushed by high-priced lobbyists and wealthy campaign contributors. The projects also make great backdrops for news conferences.

Groups such as the Sierra Club are strong supporters of renewable energy development because of its potential to reduce carbon emissions. But many members of these groups are appalled at how the technology is being rolled out. If large plants must be built, why not build them on previously disturbed land such as capped landfills or in pockets of undeveloped land in the urban core, they ask.

They argue cities such as Las Vegas that developed in a hopscotch manner could actually benefit from solar plants infilling undeveloped areas surrounded by suburban sprawl.

"We just think it's happening too fast," Cunningham says. "There has been no planning from the government on where renewable energy should be built and how fast. There has been no discussion of how to balance the need for carbon-free electricity with massive environmental damage."

Cunningham and fellow hik-

ers say the Ivanpah Solar Field planned for just over the California state line south of Primm is a prime example.

The project is expected to be the first mega solar plant in the U.S. It was the first solar project to receive approval for a federally-backed loan guarantee through the Energy Policy Act.

The Ivanpah array will be Oakland, California-based BrightSource Energy's first American plant. The company has several other projects planned, including one in the Coyote Springs development north of Las Vegas.

Construction on the Ivanpah project is expected to begin this year. It will employ about 1,000 union workers, most likely from nearby Primm and Las Vegas, at the height of construction.

The site is far from pristine, the developer says. It is crisscrossed with transmission lines and off-road vehicle trails.

As for the concerns that it will kill rare plants and destroy critical habitat of endangered desert tortoises, BrightSource says it will uproot many of the most important plants — which include ancient colonies of creosote bushes and centuries-old barrel cactuses as well as rare wildflowers and even invasive grasses — and either transplant them or keep them in a nursery for the estimated 30-year lease of the Bureau of Land Management acreage.

Desert tortoises would be moved. One in every six tortoises moved would die, according to the environmental impact statement.

The company has responded to government and private concerns about the location by downscaling to avoid the most sensitive areas.

Some environmentalists say it's a decent solution for this site but fear it sets a dangerous precedent in the deserts of Southern Nevada and California, some of which have far more sensitive habitat than the BrightSource site, explains Kevin Emmerich, another Beatty resident and member of Basin and Range Watch.

So he and his fellow hikers were looking for Native American artifacts, counting endangered species and looking for engineering flaws in the project's flood and fire mitigation plans to try to slow the process and convince the powers that be to take a different approach to the country's clean energy future.

## ENCOUNTERS WITH WONDER

### What the Light Calls Forth

By Elizabeth Ayres  
California, Maryland

The year is waxing, like the moon. From the dark and secret jug of night, the pointillist song of frogs spills forth. Urgent. Insistent. Pressing on the shell of darkness as if to crack it open and every vernal pool and ditch now swells with the get\* of frogs: luminescent, gelatinous orbs a-quiver with new life.

The Welsh have a phrase, *pwdre ser*, 'rot of the stars.' Makers of legend and poetry claim that shooting stars leave behind a fetid, shining jelly whenever they strike the ground. The English call it 'star slough,' the French, *crachat de la lune*, or 'spit of the moon.' Scientists say it could be any number of minute organisms: slime molds, fungus, bacteria, all of which can produce shimmering, viscous clumps of color which excitable folk might stumble upon in pastures or forests where meteorites reportedly have crashed.

Scientists also say matter is slow-moving light. That is, matter sometimes acts like particles, existing at particular points in space, but sometimes acts like waves, cohering as vibrational patterns. My head can't wrap itself around these facts but my

heart whispers, "I knew it all along." We are all little moons, waxing and waning in response to the sun, which is present in every photon-bearing atom on the planet. Come tomorrow's Maytime dawn, the splash of birdsong will fill morning's bucket, the willow will pour greenly to Earth and every yellow or red or purple flower will spurt from its small green cup.

Come tomorrow, the light will unstopper night's dark and secret jug, releasing me from encumbering failures and torturous guilts, spilling me forth into the day along with birds and trees and flowers. The light will whisper, "It is I, it is I, it is I," and my heart will answer, "I knew it all along," for such is the destiny of all creation, to be one in the light.

I hear people talk about their vocation as if it were nothing more than their occupation, what they do to make a living. That's way far down the list of definitions, if you look the word up in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. There you'll see that the Latin *vocare* means to call or summon and for generations people have understood a vocation to be a divine beckoning.

Maybe this is why poets and myth-makers have been so eager

to find evidence of extraterrestrial life in the shining jellies found in field or forest where some shooting star might have lain. We ourselves are star slough, spit of the moon. Carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, fashioned in the sun's explosive, gaseous womb, then released to press on the shell of darkness as if to crack it open. Every pool and ditch, every mountain and valley, every animal, mineral, vegetable swelling with the get of stars: carbon, nitrogen, oxygen in myriad arrangements of vibrating photons, a wholeness that the light calls forth, that beauty and truth proclaim, that omniscience asks us to know and omnipotence summons us to create.

\*offspring

Elizabeth Ayres, author of *Know the Way and Writing the Wave*, is the founder of the Center for Creative Writing ([CreativeWritingCenter.com](http://CreativeWritingCenter.com)). You can catch more reflections at <http://elizabethayres.wordpress.com>. Or write one of your own! Just follow the prompts at <http://encounterswithwonder.wordpress.com>. "What the Light Calls Forth" first appeared in the 5/29/09 issue of *The Enterprise*.

## Have You Heard the One About the Optimist and the Pessimist?

By Don Hazen, AlterNet.org  
Posted on March 25, 2010, excerpt

Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future? And what does our attitude have to do with making change? Well, to do the work needed to change the world for the better requires a belief that a better world is possible. Sounds like a job for an optimist.

At AlterNet, we recently polled our editorial staff and

found that we could all use an optimism booster shot. On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the most optimistic, our average was below 4. What score would you give yourself?

We're not alone, of course. Across the country, pessimism is beating optimism by quite a margin. According to a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC poll, "Americans have lost faith in both political parties; do not feel con-

fident about the present or the future; 61% feel as though the country is in the midst of a severe decline, while 35% don't — a whopping 26% spread."

Because our job is to tell you about what's happening in the world, we tend to publish a lot of bad news, sometimes without offering any solutions. This reminds me of the Oscar Wilde quote: a pessimist is, "One who, when he/she has the choice of

two evils, chooses both." I know that isn't so funny, but let's face it: focusing too often on worst-case scenarios disempowers us.

It's time to change our attitude. So we decided to change our ways. From here on out, we will do our best to highlight ideas that can help us change the world for the better. Will you join us?

In fact, we have made a commitment to publish at least one positive, visionary article every

day. That is our promise to you. And in working closely with [Change.org](http://Change.org), we will add new focus on action campaigns to follow up our articles and videos.

After all, how can we be creative, bold and determined, if we are not optimistic? That is our challenge. We must be upbeat as we push for change, support people in need and fight corporate abuse and the increasingly fanatical right wing. "Opti-

mism is the foundation of courage," writes Nicholas Murray Butler.

Don't worry, we are not becoming Pollyannas. We know how tough things are. We'll still get irate and scream about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Wall Street greed, right-wing extremism and environmental collapse. But we think more balance is important and apparently you agree . . .

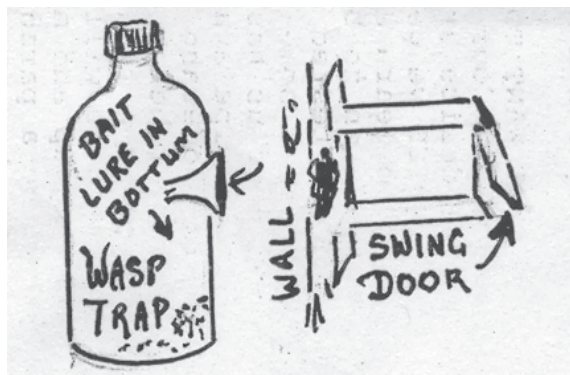
Until you dig a hole, you plant a tree,  
you water it and make it survive,  
you haven't done a thing. You are just talking.

Wangari Muta Maathai, activist and Nobel laureate (b. 1940)  
Submitted by Sandy Chilcote



## Musings

# Winning Battles But Losing the War on Invasive Alien Species



## About Humane Traps and Exit Doors

By Al Fry  
Garden Valley, Idaho

As potential caretakers for our furry and feathered friends on Earth, we haven't really been very honorable or merciful.

As our new nation started out the popularity of Beaver felt hats had the mountain men soon decimating the Beaver population... and it didn't take long to completely eliminate the Passenger Pigeons. One thing did improve a bit and that was the recent introduction of more humane traps. If you run across a *Fur, Fish and Game* magazine, you can see some of these advertised. Still, since the Rats and Mice are still competing for our food, we have had less compassion for them.

I have a wondrous metal trap that tempts the rodents with a little passageway . . . with a trigger plate on the floor. Once the plate is activated a paddle wheel quickly sweeps the questing rodent into a holding chamber.

Birds like sparrows were competitors for chicken feed back when a good part of our population had some chickens. Thousands of wire screen bird traps were catching sparrows up to around the time of World War II. The birds would be tempted by some grain located on the other side of a little elevator box on a pivot arm. Once on the elevator their weight would take them to the lower holding section.

Woodpeckers have always been a problem when they make holes in the eaves of homes. The bees and bats find these holes and often move in without the homeowners' awareness. Some folks wind up with whole walls full of bees and honey . . . or bats and bat dung.

A recent invasion was signaled by a young bat dropping down one night on my night shirt. Getting some light on the

subject I gingerly rounded up a glove and found the little lost fellow a place to rest outside.

Locating a tiny hole near the eaves, I got a pair of tin snips and made up a little tin "one-way box." This box had a little swing-down-swing-up door that used a little wire at the top to act as a hinge. Tacking the open side of the box over the hole allowed the bats to leave the next evening . . . and to run into re-entrance problems for 15 minutes or so as dawn came and they could not reenter.

Many insect traps today work on much the same principle and almost any critter of limited I.Q. levels can be captured or blocked out with variations on the principle. Typically a funnel-shaped screen or jar will have a small exit hole at the narrow end and the insect will fail to find it again.

Lobster traps have been supplying millions of dollars worth of sea food for years with another larger variation.

State and government agencies now face increasing pressure to trap larger animals and relocate them . . . instead of 'whack' them.

This rise in a feeling of compassion is a step in the right direction . . . but still ignores the many animals spending their lives cramped up in small cages or pens.

With the declining bee population, invasions are less frequent these days. Since a queen and swarm of workers will now run \$85 or so it is downright thoughtless and foolish to tackle the problem with a can of wasp-killer spray. Many beekeepers are glad to give aid or advice on such problems.

Many farm and ranch stores have various automatic mouse traps, Havahart live animal traps and bottle fly traps. One of the larger mail-order outfits is Jeffers at 800-533-3377.

GLAND, Switzerland, February 4, 2010 (ENS, *excerpt*) — Invasive alien species are one of the top three threats to the biodiversity of life on Earth, according to the first assessment report on invasives in 57 countries coordinated by the Global Invasive Species Programme, GISP.

Invasives can be rats, mice, foxes, goats, toads, fish, plants, ants or micro-organisms, to list a few. Spread around the planet by international travel, trade and tourism, these alien invaders are jeopardizing global biodiversity by out-competing native species for resources, altering ecosystem functions and changing ecological relationships among native species.

GISP Executive Director Dr. Sarah Simons said, "Despite the enormous costs, not only to biodiversity but also food security, human health, trade, transport and, more broadly, economic development, invasive species continue to receive inadequate attention from policymakers and in 2010, there is simply no excuse for not tackling one of the greatest threats to the environmental and economic well-being of our planet."

The international team of investigators who wrote the GISP report documented a total of 542 species acting as invasive aliens — 316 plants, 101 marine organisms, 44 freshwater fish, 43 mammal, 23 bird and 15 amphibian species.

Professor Melodie McGeoch, lead author of the report and member of the Centre for Invasion at South Africa's Stellenbosch University, says these numbers underestimate the extent of invasive aliens.

"We showed that regions with low development status and little investment in research have lower than expected numbers of invasive aliens," said McGeoch.

Only nine invasive species were found in Equatorial Guinea, according to the report, but 222 invasive species were counted in New Zealand.

The report was produced by scientists from the Centre for Invasion Biology, BirdLife International (based in the UK) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature or IUCN (based in Switzerland) which maintains the authoritative Red List of Threatened Species.

Of the 57 countries assessed, they found that, on average, there are 50 non-indigenous species per country which have a negative impact on biodiversity.

Invasive alien species can directly affect human health and humans can be the carriers of invasive species into new locations. Infectious diseases are often invasive species imported by travelers or they can be diseases carried by exotic species of birds, rodents and insects or by humans.

The pathogenic chytrid fungus, for instance, entirely unknown until 1998, is thought to be the cause of the decline and extinction of many amphibians around the globe. The disease caused by the fungus can be spread by humans and a host of other species, ranging from exotic fish to African clawed frogs.

Invasives also can have indirect health effects on humans as a result of the use of pesticides and herbicides that contaminate water and soil.

The Global Invasive Species Database lists 100 of the worst invasive alien species. Species were selected for the list according to two criteria — their serious impact on biological diversity and/or human activities and their illustration of important issues surrounding biological invasion.

Ten of the worst are:

- **The Asian tiger mosquito, *Aedes albopictus***, is spread via the international tire trade as rainwater is retained in tires stored outside. In order to control its spread such trading routes must be highlighted for the introduction of sterilization or quarantine measures. The tiger mosquito is associated with the transmission of many human diseases, including the viruses dengue, West Nile and Japanese encephalitis.
- **The little fire ant, *Was-***



Photo courtesy Govt.NSW

Feral goats in New South Wales, Australia trample soils, degrading soil stability and causing erosion. Goats can be helpful when they are set to graze on invasive plants.

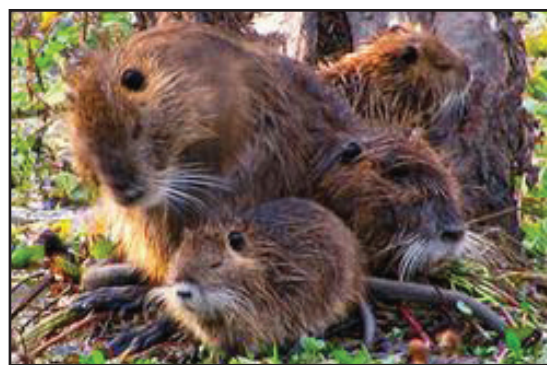


Photo by Julie Alica

The Nutria is a rodent that escaped from fur farms and multiplied on several continents.



Photo Courtesy New Zealand DOC

In New Zealand, the yellowhead is now endangered because of rats.

*mannia auropunctata*, is blamed for reducing species diversity, reducing overall abundance of flying and tree-dwelling insects and eliminating arachnid populations. It is also known for its painful stings. On the Galapagos Islands, it eats the hatchlings of tortoises and attacks the eyes and cloacae of the adult tortoises. It is considered to be perhaps the greatest ant species threat in the Pacific region.

- **The brown tree snake, *Boiga irregularis***, is secretive by nature. It is often found concealed on container ships and in aircraft cargo. It probably arrived on Guam after World War II in a cargo ship. Now the wetlands, coastlands and forests of Guam are bereft of nine out of twelve native bird species and two out of 11 native lizards due to the snakes' voracious appetite.
- **Zebra mussels, *Dreissena polymorpha***, are native to the Caspian and Black Seas.

They are now established in the UK, Western Europe, Canada and the USA. They compete with zooplankton for food, thus affecting natural food webs. They also interfere with the ecological functions of native molluscs and cause great economic damage.

- **The Nile perch, *Lates niloticus***, is a large freshwater fish. Also known as capitaine, mputa or sangara, it can grow up to 200kg and two metres (440 pounds and 6 1/2 feet) in length. It was introduced to Lake Victoria in 1954 where it has contributed to the extinction of more than 200 endemic fish species through predation and competition for food.

- **The coqui frog, *Eleutherodactylus coqui***, is a relatively small tree frog native to Puerto Rico. The frogs are quite adaptable to different ecological zones and elevations. Their loud call is the main reason they are consid-

ered a pest. *E. coqui's* mating call is its namesake, a high-pitched, two-note "co-qui" which attains nearly 100 decibels at 0.5 metres (1.6 feet). *E. coqui* have a voracious appetite and there is concern in Hawaii, where it has been introduced, that *E. coqui* may put Hawaii's endemic insect and spider species at risk and compete with endemic birds and other native fauna which rely on insects for food.

- **The house mouse, *Mus musculus***, probably has a world distribution more extensive than any mammal, apart from humans. Its geographic spread has been facilitated by its commensal relationship with humans which extends back at least 8,000 years. They do considerable damage by destroying crops and consuming and/or contaminating food supplies intended for human consumption. They are prolific breeders, sometimes erupting

Continued on page 15



## Korean University Recycles Food Waste, Saves Landfill Space

Dear Iona,  
I had an interview with professor Jong Woong Park, Daegu Haany University a few days ago but I could not type it up because I was really busy. Now I will write few lines about the interview.

Pyong Roh  
Daegu, Korea

Pyong: Good morning professor Park!

Professor Park: How are you Dr. Roh?

Pyong: I understand that you are specialized in food waste treatment. Why are you interested in food waste and animal manure treatment?

Professor Park: That is a good question. The amount of food waste has been increasing in Korea in the past decades. As of 2000 the amount of food waste in Korea was 11,434 metric tons. It increased to 13,682 tons in 2007.

As you know Korea is a small country and we do not have much space for sanitary landfills. And the government

banned the food waste putting in the landfill sites. In 2005 I thought of a better way to recycle the food waste and to treat the water from the food waste.

Pyong: It is very interesting. How do you recycle the food waste?

Professor Park: There are two ways to recycle the food waste. One is to recycle the food waste for animal feed. And the other is to recycle the food waste for fertilizer.

I will tell you about the fertilizer first. Food waste is collected at food waste collection plants and it is mixed with saw-dust. And then it is fermented at the right temperature. When it is well fermented it is bagged for shipping to the farmers.

For animal feed, only edible food waste is separated from the waste and water is removed from the food waste. And then it is dried. The dry stuff is ground, and bagged for shipping.

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## Mark's Green Party: Saving the Co-Op: Part V Going for the Sale

By Mark Lautman  
Rockville, Maryland



Latonya Rotterdam, the high-powered Philadelphia marketing executive running the Happy Apple Blossom Co-Op, was going over the operations reports during her weekly staff meeting.

"Jack," she said, "You're familiar with the co-op's composting policy?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Palette Jack. "Whatever fruits and vegetables we don't sell, we put into the compost pile. It's a very enlightened policy."

"Yes, Jack, I suppose it is. Here's something else that's enlightened. The guys from the composting department said they unloaded 500 pounds of baby okras into the pile last month."

"Baby okras in our compost!" said a shocked Tincture Alice. "Shouldn't we tell the authorities? I'm sure there is some regulation against composting underage vegetables."

"Alice, what's shocking is that during the same month we purchased 500 pounds of baby okras. Jack, if we bought 500 pounds of baby okras and we composted 500 pounds of baby okras, what conclusion do you make?"

"That our compost pile is severely out of balance. I think we should add 50 brown onions, coarsely chopped, and a few bottles of freshly ground pepper. If I call Kim Anderson's warehouse, he can make the delivery by four o'clock."

Rotterdam made a note to herself that when the co-op achieves the status of corporate behemoth, Palette Jack will forever be excluded from the business school tuition reimbursement program.

"Jack, what it means is that we've been buying okra and simply tossing it into the ground. We're not selling the okra. From what the composting guys tell me, we have the same problem with all of our vegetables. Simply put, our sales do not support our inventory levels."

Palette Jack and Tincture Alice asked the group for a few minutes of silence so they could fully synthesize the connection between sales and inventory.

"My friends, you know that our financial situation is improving but still dire. I need all of you to sell more to our customers. I received another threatening letter from the bank and if we don't pay off the loan in a few months, they will foreclose."

"I don't know how to sell," protested Alice. "I don't feel comfortable walking up to perfect strangers and telling them they need tea tree oil for their acne."

"Alice, that's called a 'hard sell' and we're not going to pursue that channel. We're going to follow the method of 'piggybacking.' For example, when someone purchases some of our meatless hamburgers, you ask them if they would also like gluten-free buns. If someone purchases flour, ask them if they would like yeast."

"I get it," said Palette Jack. "Alice, it's not that hard. If someone wants to buy a loofah sponge, ask them if they also want to buy a bathtub."

"That's definitely in the right direction, Jack," said Rotterdam. "Let's all get out into the aisles and make some sales! Remember, the first member to make their monthly sales quota gets to park in the new 'employee of the month' space."

"I don't have a car," said Palette Jack. "OK, Jack, let me put it this way. If you make your quota, you won't have to eat 500 pounds of baby okra."

The co-op's members fanned out across the floor to work off all that

excess inventory. Tincture Alice was the first to find opportunity: Mrs. Gruen-swaller had come in for her weekly shopping.

"Hello, Mrs. Gruen-swaller, how can I help you today?"

"My physician said I need to take iron supplements. Do you have any?"

"Yes, ma'am, we do. Here is a nice, pure mixture. You realize that iron from supplements isn't bioavailable, don't you? You also need Vitamin C to help assimilate the iron into your body."

"That's fine, dear," said Gruen-swaller. "I'll take two bottles, one of iron and one of Vitamin C."

Tincture Alice was pleased at how well she could piggyback a sale. Palette Jack heard this exchange from the next aisle and wasn't going to be outdone. He approached Gruen-swaller.

"Ma'am, supplements are fine and all but wouldn't you rather have the real thing? For just a few dollars more, you can have two kilograms of raw almonds. Take 10 almonds a day and you'll have the reddest hemoglobin this side of the Erie Canal."

"Gee, I think you're right. I'll go with the almonds."

Tincture Alice felt her sale slipping away and tried to sweeten the deal.

"Mrs. Gruen-swaller, if you take both bottles of Vitamin C and iron, I'll give you a coupon for a free box of facial tissue. I recommend something with 40% post-consumer fiber. Anything more than that and you might be blowing your nose into a transcript of Bill Clinton's first inaugural address."

"That's very generous," said Gruen-swaller. "I'll take two boxes, if you don't mind."

Palette Jack was not to be outdone. "Ma'am, if you go with the raw almonds, I'll throw in sixty pounds of hypoallergenic bok choy. Did you know that bok choy is rich in beta-carotene? That's a known cancer inhibitor."

"Yes, that does sound like a good idea..." hesitated Gruen-swaller.

"My co-worker said that his bok choy is a cancer inhibitor," countered Tincture Alice with disdain. "Look, Mrs. Gruen-swaller, a smart consumer buys what she needs. Ma'am, you may never get cancer and so you don't need his bok choy. Here is my personal booklet of the first five thousand prime numbers. It's yours if you walk right up to the checkout line with the vitamins and facial tissue."

From her office window, Latonya Rotterdam saw Mrs. Gruen-swaller running out of the co-op, leaving behind a trail of bottled supplements, facial tissue, bok choy and pages of printed numbers.

Rotterdam burst onto the store's floor. "What happened?" she demanded of Tincture Alice and Palette Jack. "Mrs. Gruen-swaller is one of our best customers. She always buys one of our specialty items. Why is she running away?"

"We're not sure," said Tincture Alice. "Excuse me, ma'am, but do I see a blemish on your left cheek? How about a bottle of tea tree oil? If you buy in the next 10 minutes, you're entitled to a free copy of the Indian Navy's institutional cook book. There's a great recipe there that calls for 250 pounds of baby okra."

Mark Lautman writes humorous articles on technology and the holistic lifestyle.



Photo Supplied by Author

A select group of female pigs are chosen to be turned into living machines who are repeatedly impregnated until they are worn out and wasted by the industry and then thrown out like trash.

## Thinking About Pigs

By Bruce Wagman

Animal Blawg, Transcending Speciesism Since 2008 (David Cassuto's blog about animal law)

Pigs have been on my mind a lot lately. Years ago I met several of them at the Farm Sanctuary home in Orland, California and, while I already had appreciated their complex personalities and emotional lives, getting to spend time with them changed the knowledge to revelation.

We sat on a riverbank with Gene Baur, founder of Farm Sanctuary, and scratched pig bellies in the sun and watched them playing, eating, lounging. The grunts of joy and doglike behavior was notable from the guy I was petting. He was halfway onto his 1,000-pound-plus back, grunting and snuffling while I rubbed and cooed to him.

That day, probably fifteen years ago, has never left me and my love of his species was further informed by my visits and introductions to the great pig friends I have made at Animal Place. They impressed me as a prescient and extremely playful bunch — eminently curious, very thoughtful and wise.

That's a great image but mainly, for the past ten years or so, when I think of pigs, I think of mother-torture. From dealing with the issues and cases I now have, seared in my mind, images of "gestation crates" or "sow stalls," those confinement technique weapons of cruelty that the modern pig meat industry utilizes for commercial efficiency, while simultaneously robbing their pigs of every sense of being an individual, a pig, a mother.

A select group of female pigs are chosen, presumably for their genetic superiority, to be turned into living machines who are repeatedly impregnated until they are worn out and wasted by the industry and then thrown out like so many pounds of trash. During their lives they go from gestation crate (while pregnant) to farrowing crate where, after giving birth, they are placed so that their young can suckle but cannot otherwise interact with their mom, who is again kept on a concrete slab inside bars, in an area that is usually slightly smaller than the mother, so that she not only has to lie in her own waste but she is also pushed into metal bars 24-7. Pigs in these confinement situations suffer in pain from the lack of exercise and movement and experience psychological damage from the lifetime of deprivation and denial.

Unless we can establish that pigs have absolutely no feelings — do not

feel pain, do not feel emotion, have no internal life and mind — this level of confinement raises problems. And that's why it has been one of the few current practices in the farmed-animal industry that has been successfully challenged in limited places around the country.

In 2001 the Florida Constitution banned the practice after a phase-out period. Arizona, Oregon, Colorado and California followed with statutes prohibiting gestation crates. Other practices were also covered by these laws but, the point here is that, at some level the meat-consuming public (as well as plenty of vegetarians) agreed that it was not willing to be complicit in this kind of treatment.

And we have been successful in litigation as well. In Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) v. Corcpork, ALDF and consumers challenged the use of gestation crates at a 9,000-pig facility in California. As part of the settlement in that case, Corcpork shut down its California operation.

Hooray for those states and any that follow! This is important incremental change — both geographically and with respect to the treatment challenged. And there are those who actually criticize these laws as "welfarist" because they implicitly acknowledge the continued use of animals for food.

In this debate, my focus remains with the animals, not the theorists and philosophers. Call it anthropomorphism, but for me this is the proper analysis: I know from my studies of pigs that they largely feel pain like I do; I know that they have large brains that are similar to the structure of mine. I make the small jump then to assume they suffer both physically and psychologically — virtually indisputable.

So what I do is I then imagine myself as a pig, in a situation akin to a gestation crate — painful, alone, deprived of virtually all semblance of humanity except intake and output. Then I imagine two people coming up to me. One has a shirt that says "Animal Protection and Welfare" and the other has a shirt that says "Abolition or Death." The first offers me a way out of my situation, so that I can live a life with a greater degree of freedom, more of a semblance of humanity, although I will still be used for the same purposes. The other asks me to live my entire life and then die in pain and misery so that s/he, standing outside my cage and going home to a comfortable bed every night, can try to stop all people from eating meat in my lifetime, a task we must all agree is vir-

tually impossible.

Call it selfish, call it self-centered and definitely call it my opinion, but I think that most pigs will choose the better life, with the hopes that people will continue to grow in their appreciation of the pig species. But for the lives of millions of other pig mothers, I think the improvement is a major success and not one to be sacrificed in the name of abolition. If we can change the life experience of ten — never mind millions — of animals, it is a fight worth fighting and winning.

And let's not think the battle is won because a few states have made the move. There is still a mountain of resistance to even these small changes.

In New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals v. New Jersey Department of Agriculture, 196 N.J. 366 (2008), the court held that the Department of Agriculture's decision to allow this kind of crating "although controversial, falls well within its area of expertise." So in all but the few states that have banned gestation crates, the practice continues to affect millions of pigs every year. (North Carolina has the highest concentration of pig farming operations in the country.) This is a great highlight for all of us who care about the animals — it seems like the majority, or at least the most influential part of society, do not think even these most extreme practices need changing.

I saw "pork cheek" on a menu last week and simultaneously gagged and was outraged. The meat departments in supermarkets scream out in silence behind their pretty plastic wrappers. And every Mother's Day, while paying due gratitude to my human mom, I spend hours in stunned pain considering the millions of mothers lying on cold cement floors, helplessly lying in their excrement and unable to interact with their young in any way except as a supplier of nutrition so that they can be shipped off, grown fat and killed.

I guess I think about pigs all the time.

**Bruce Wagman is an animal lawyer focused on animal law litigation, consultation and education. He has brought and tried multiple state and federal cases involving a wide range of animal law issues, including cruelty, exotic animals in entertainment, biomedical research, farmed animals and veterinary malpractice. He wrote the first casebook used in law schools on the subject (*Animal Law*). Contact him at <http://www.schiffhardin.com>.**

## The Nanotech Gamble

Continued from page 8

requirement that manufacturers ensure that the products be safe" but says that compliance is essentially voluntary, with the FDA taking action only after an unsafe product is reported.

AOL News repeatedly asked what steps the FDA was taking regarding nano-titanium dioxide, whose risks are acknowledged by other regulatory bodies, including the EPA and NIOSH. The slow-to-arrive answer from spokeswoman Rita Chappelle was: "If information were to indicate that additional safety evaluation or other regulatory action is warranted, we would work with all parties to take the steps appropriate to ensure the safety of marketed products."

Chappelle says FDA scientists are conducting research that focuses on nano-titanium dioxide but declines to offer any details. Several of the agency's own safety experts say they spe-

cifically have urged that the engineered structures not be used in any products they do regulate without appropriate safety testing.

### Why Nano-Optimists Hold the Upper Hand

Many government investigators join civilian public health specialists in denouncing the scant money that goes to exploring nanomaterials' possibly wicked side effects. The 2011 federal budget proposes spending \$1.8 billion on nanotechnology but just \$117 million, or 6.6 percent, of that total was earmarked for the study of safety issues.

The Obama administration says it is being appropriately vigilant about nanotech. "This administration takes nanotechnology-related environment, health and safety very seriously. It is a significant priority," says Travis Earles, assistant director

for nanotechnology in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. After taking office, he adds, "We were able to immediately increase the spending in those areas."

But Earles, in what has become standard federal practice, is more fixated on nanotech's upsides. "We are talking about new jobs, new markets, economic and societal benefits so broad they stretch the imagination," he says. Yes, "absolutely," there are reasons for caution, he says. "But you can't refer to nanotechnology as a monolithic entity. Risk assessment depends fundamentally on context — it depends on the specific application and the specific material."

There's some scientific basis for this emphasize-the-positive position. "Every time you find a hazardous response in a test tube, that should not necessarily be construed as a guarantee of a real-life adverse outcome," notes

Dr. Andre Nel, chief of the division of nanomedicine at the California Nanosystems Institute at UCLA.

But there are two ways to proceed in the face of such uncertainty. One is to forge ahead, assuming the best — that this will be one of those times where the lab results don't correlate to real-world experiences. Another is to hit pause and do the additional testing necessary to be sure that sickened lab animals do not portend human harm.

For advocates of more precautions for nanotech, the latter is the only responsible course.

"From cosmetics to cookware to food, nanoparticles are making their way into every facet of consumer life with little to no oversight from government regulators," says Lovera from Food & Water Watch. "There are too many unanswered questions and common sense demands that these products be kept off the

market until their safety is assured."

With a moratorium not a realistic option, the U.S. government, along with its counterparts abroad, is left to tread gingerly in responding to the emerging evidence of nanotechnology's potential hazards.

"They don't want to cause either a collapse in the industry or generate any kind of public backlash of any sort," says Pat Mooney, executive director of ETC Group, an international safety and environmental watchdog. "So they're in the background talking about how they're going to tweak regulations — where in fact a lot more than tweaking is required."

"They've got literally thousands of [nano] products in the marketplace and they don't have any safety regulations in place," Mooney continues. "These are things that we're rubbing in our skin, spraying in our fields, eating

and wearing. And that's a mistake, and they're trying to figure out what to do about it all."

**Andrew Schneider is the Senior Public Health Correspondent at AOLNews.com. To provide feedback on this series, please write to us at [nanotechreport@aolnews.com](mailto:nanotechreport@aolnews.com). To read the original article, please go to <http://www.aolnews.com/nanotech/article/amid-nanotechs-dazzling-promise-health-risks-grow/19401235?cid=main/hp>.**

OE has never covered this issue before so please let us know if you'd like us to run the other articles in this series:

- *Regulated or Not, Nano-Foods Coming to a Store Near You,*
- *Obsession With Growth Stymies Regulators,*
- *Why Nanotech Hasn't (Yet) Triggered the 'Yuck Factor',* and
- *Trigged-Products Are Everywhere.*



## Grassroots Power

# Turning Capitalism on Its Head by Cooperating for Sustainable Food

By Vanessa Barrington  
EcoSalon via AlterNet.org  
April 9, 2010

Innovative new ways of doing business are blossoming on both coasts. MOO Milk and Bob's Red Mill show how food companies that serve eaters, workers and farmers can be the wave of the future.

Late last winter, when dairy giant HP Hood informed 10 Maine dairy farmers that it would no longer buy their milk, things looked pretty bleak. These farmers had invested in going organic to supply the burgeoning organic milk market but now, with the price of organic milk lower than the cost of production, the farmers were left with two choices: sell their cows or dump their organic milk on the conventional market for even less money.

Just a little over a year later, those same farmers are surviving (with the hope of thriving) in the future, thanks to an innovative new business structure called an L3C, a new form of incorporation for low-profit, limited liability corporations, that gives them eligibility to receive grants and endowments in the same way as a cooperative or non-profit. Besides being low profit, one requirement of an L3C is that it "have a social purpose."

Grocery shelves across Maine are now stocking MOO (Maine's Own Organic), consumers have access to high quality organic milk produced by family farmers, farmers get to keep their land and, radically, both consumers and farmers have wrested control from the market forces that usually rule us and together are building an alternative food system that serves them.

David Bright, Secretary of

Maine's Own Organic Milk Company and member of the Maine Farm Bureau and Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association took some time out from planting his spring peas to talk with me about how the business came together.

With a mission to "keep farmland and make farming profitable for farmers," The Maine Farm Bureau teamed up with the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association and the idea of operating as an L3C was born. As Bright tells me, the founders have a social purpose of "providing an environment in which dairy farmers can make money farming."

Still, the problem of getting the milk processed, packaged and to market remained. After all, Hood once paid for distribution. These farmers, some with as few as 15 cows, are located in remote rural areas far from processing plants or markets and don't have tankers to transport their milk.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the farm. Putting aside any concerns about competition, two Maine dairies agreed to help. Smiling Hill Dairy agreed to become re-certified as an organic milk processor, purchase a new tank and process the milk. Another dairy, Oakhurst Dairy, donated the machine that packages the milk into cartons. Oakhurst also washes the MOO Milk tanker and does the lab work.

Says Bright, "We were fortunate in that we had some good Maine businesses that saw the importance of keeping these farms going."

Sounds like socialism to me. "We don't plan to make a lot of money as a company," explains Bright. "For example, if we were

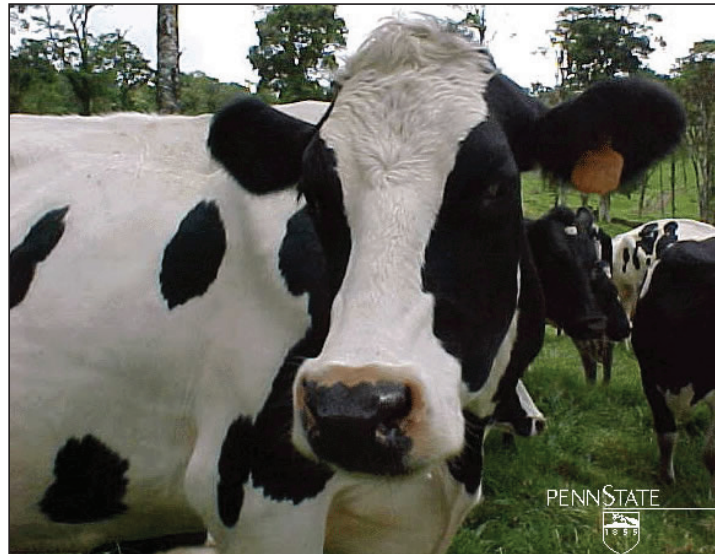


Photo Penn State's Department of Dairy and Animal Science  
*MOO Milk and Bob's Red Mill show how food companies that serve eaters, workers and farmers can be the wave of the future.*

a co-op, sometimes decisions get made that are good for the company but not so good for the farmers. Basically, we'll buy your milk and sell it and you'll get 90% of the profits."

Bright says the farmer gets about \$1 for every half gallon of milk sold. That's twice what conventional farmers under the federal order get. The farmers get the \$1 no matter what and they also get 90% of any profit left after trucking, processing, marketing, fees and taxes.

The retail price of the milk is high — much higher than out-of-state organic milk (from \$4.29/half in most grocery stores compared to \$3.39-\$3.99/half for other brands). But consumers, incredibly, are willing to pay it.

Customers are willingly paying the real cost of production for milk that they can feel good about. Farmers are making a living wage. And the money is staying right in the local community, creating jobs and wealth in Maine.

As Bright tells me, "The only money that goes out of state is to buy the cartons."

Meanwhile, on the West Coast, near Portland, Bob Moore of Bob's Red Mill (grains) caused a stir back in February when he announced that he was handing over ownership of the privately-held company to its employees in celebration of his 81<sup>st</sup> birthday. The stock transfer, once complete, could represent a significant wealth transfer to employees throughout the company. When you consider that Moore could have cashed out and sold his successful company to the highest bidder, this is really quite radical.

According to an article from *Oregon Live*, Bob's Red Mill is a multi-million dollar company and has clocked in an annual growth rate of between 20 and 30 percent every year since 2004.

What does this mean to employees? I spoke with a few to find out, and asked Production Manager Jeff Schrader how he

felt when he heard the news.

"I wasn't surprised," says Schrader. "We always knew he'd do something like that... it's never been about the money. He's absolutely astounded me personally with some of the other things he's done over the years."

He said that Moore has never made decisions based completely on the short-term bottom line. By way of example, he told me that rather than lay people off during slow times, Moore would instead rotate jobs, putting people where they were needed. The end result was better for the company in the long run because, when busy times returned, there were always trained operators available.

I also learned that Moore comes to work everyday and is heavily involved in daily operations.

Yvonne Fyan, Customer Service Supervisor, who has been with the company 11 years, says the "enormity of what Bob did and what employees have for their futures," is just starting to sink in.

Employees can't buy or sell the stock but it is transferred to them to be paid out when they leave (of their own accord or not) or retire. Think about the prospect of people who will be able to send their kids to college who might not have been able to otherwise.

I was curious to know if employees will have shared decision-making and will serve on the board. Via email, I learned from John Wagner, CFO and partner, that this Employee Stock Ownership Plan is primarily a retirement plan with the same regulations as a 401(k) plan. For the immediate future the current officers of Bob's Red Mill will continue in their existing roles running the company and making the day-to-day operating

decisions.

As the company moves into 100% employee ownership, there will be a new Board of Directors made up of both employees and outside executives who will elect the officers of the company.

Fyan, for her part, loves the job. Her favorite thing is helping customers over the phone who have just been diagnosed with celiac disease and been given no information by their medical provider. She says, "It's gratifying to be able to talk to people who are bewildered and scared and don't know what to do." Gluten-intolerant people are a large part of the Bob's Red Mill consumer base.

All the grains are sourced from North American farms (most from the U.S.) and they are all ground, processed and packaged right there in the company's only plant in Oregon.

Since Fyan is one of the people who answers the phone when customers call, I asked her how customers had taken the news.

She said there had been "an outpouring" of supportive emails and calls from happy customers who said they had no idea there was a real Bob and that he really owned the company and others who didn't know of the company but said they would now seek out its products.

Apparently, people really like this "socialism" stuff.

And here's a fun fact I learned: Moore really does wear the trademark red jacket that you see on the packaging. That combined with the name, Bob's Red Mill, makes me think we've had these enemies in our midst, conspiring to redistribute wealth to scores of employees, for a very long time now.

How could we have missed this enemy within?

## Peat Belongs Here – Not in the Garden

By Geoffrey Lean, excerpt  
Telegraph.co.UK, March 26, 2010

...William Bunting's main preoccupation was not to preserve rights of way but to save the moor from being dug up for peat to nourish millions of pot plants and flower beds in British homes and gardens. I thought he was mad about that, too. Thorne Waste seemed aptly named to me — then a trainee reporter on the local *Goole Times* — a truly desolate stretch of land of no apparent value. But, in my ignorance, I could not have been more mistaken.

The bog, sometimes called

"Britain's Amazon," is one of our most important wildlife habitats — home to no fewer than 5,000 species of plants and animals, some very rare, including the nightjar, the golden plover, the great sundew, bog asphodel, the bog-hopper beetle and a small yellow fly called the "hairy canary."

When a company tried to drain the most ecologically valuable bit of the Waste for peat extraction, the campaigner and his supporters (calling themselves "Bunting's Beavers") blocked the ditches with dams, some up to 40 feet thick . . .



Photo: Les Gibbon/Alamy  
*William Bunting devotes his life to saving peatlands in West Yorkshire. Ninety-four percent of Britain's lowland raised bogs are seriously damaged.*

## Scientists Call for Action on Peat Bogs

The Press and Journal, excerpt  
Northern Scotland 30/03/2010

Scientists are calling for more compensation for farmers who take action to protect their peatland. The experts from Aberdeen University say swift action is needed to prevent the further deterioration of Britain's peat bogs, which make up the nation's biggest carbon store.

At present farmers are compensated according to the area of peatland they own, irrespective of how much conservation activity they do. Mark Reed, from the university's school of geosciences, said that should be changed

and farmers who do more to preserve their bogs should get more reward.

Peat bogs secure three billion tons of the key greenhouse gas in the ground. When peat degrades it releases carbon dioxide, contributing to climate change. Peatland which has already been degraded is likely to come under more pressure as the climate changes, with warmer temperatures and drier summers drying them out, researchers said.

Peat bogs also have an important role in the provision of the country's drinking water and are a key habitat for rare plants and animals . . .

## Likely Removal of Four Dams on Klamath River

Continued from page 1  
the Klamath Tribes of Oregon's effort to regain some land lost when Congress "terminated" its reservation in 1962.

This was a seminal moment, a genuine reconciliation among tribal and agricultural leaders who discovered that the hatred they'd nursed was unfounded. "Trust is the key," says Kandra, the Project farmer who went from litigant to negotiator. "We took little baby steps, giving each other opportunities to build trust, and then we got to a place where we could have some really candid discussions without screaming and yelling — it was like, 'Here's how I see the world.' Pretty valuable stuff. The folks that developed those kinds of relationships got along pretty good."

Still, one crucial ingredient was missing: Unless PacifiCorp agreed to dismantle the dams, river restoration was impossible and the pact was a well-intentioned, empty exercise. But PacifiCorp now had compelling reasons to consider dam removal. Not only was relicensing going to be expensive but Klamath tribespeople were becoming an embarrassing irritant, in two consecutive years interrupting Berkshire Hathaway's annual-

meeting/Buffett-lovefests in Omaha with nonviolent protests that won media attention.

Also, the Bush administration, customarily no friend of dam removal, signaled its support for a basin-wide agreement. Negotiations between PacifiCorp and mid-level government officials began in January 2008 but made little progress until a meeting in Shepherdstown, West Virginia four months later when, for the first time, Senior Interior Department Counselor Michael Bogert presided.

As Bogert recently explained, President Bush himself took an interest in the Klamath "because it was early on in his watch that the Klamath became almost a symbol" of river basin dysfunction. To Bush, the decision to support dam removal was a business decision, not an environmental one: The "game-changer," Bogert said, was the realization that because of the high cost of relicensing, dam removal made good fiscal sense for PacifiCorp. That fact distinguished the Klamath from other dam removal controversies such as the battle over four dams on Idaho's Snake River, whose removal the Bush administration continued to oppose.

According to Dean Brockbank, PacifiCorp's chief negotiator, until the Shepherdstown meeting a settlement seemed "far-fetched;" afterward, as a result of the Bush administration's involvement, it was in the "realm of reality."

But PacifiCorp still had concerns; for example, that dam removal could subject it to liability claims if the sediment behind the dams proved toxic. When Bogert assured the utility that the agreement would absolve it of liability, the chances of a settlement soared. After the tribes balked at PacifiCorp's proposed target date for dam removal — 2028, so it could reap a last bounty of hydropower revenue — the utility agreed on 2020 and the path to the agreement was cleared.

In November 2008, when then-Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne announced a detailed agreement in principle with PacifiCorp to take down the dams, he acknowledged that he customarily opposed dam removal but that the Klamath had taught him "to evaluate each situation on a case-by-case basis." In September 2009, Kempthorne's successor, Ken Salazar, announced that PacifiCorp and government officials had reached a final agreement

PacifiCorp and the many signers of the earlier Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement then ironed out inconsistencies between the two pacts in a final negotiation that ended with a final deal in January 2010.

When the agreement was announced, Becky Hyde (see last month — she and her husband moved their ranch and reduced the number of cattle) said, "I think part of what this does is to set up governance for this whole river basin that's never been here, kind of what John Wesley Powell wanted to do a long time ago — set up a governance structure based on watersheds rather than other boundaries (see page 2).

"The more profound thing is the relationships across the basin among parties who traditionally have not had the opportunity to get together. It's the start of a new way of being in a place, and I think ultimately for fish and for communities, it's just the right thing to do. I hope twenty or thirty years from now there will be young people in this basin who have really no idea what happened here — they just live in a place that's so much healthier. They don't live in a fight; they live in communities that are getting along and taking care of the place."

According to the agreement, the U.S. Congress and California and Oregon legislatures must allocate about a billion dollars to carry out the river's restoration. Of that amount, at least half would consist of funds already being spent on basin fisheries. The plan's supporters argue that the remaining \$400 to \$500 million can be justified as one-time expenditures that will restore the river, remove the dams and help stabilize the basin's economy, in contrast to the continuing stream of funds, already over \$100 million, spent patching up the basin in emergencies.

Most of the cost of actual dam removal will be borne by PacifiCorp's customers, who will pay a two percent surcharge on their electricity bills to raise \$200 million. In case dam removal proves more expensive, California voters are being asked to approve a \$250 million Klamath bond measure as part of a \$11.4 billion package of water laws on the November 2010 ballot. The package is highly controversial for reasons having nothing to do with the Klamath and its approval is uncertain — it's the biggest reason that Klamath dam removal is still not guaranteed. (For its part, the Oregon legislature has

already approved the deal.)

Even if the agreement is carried out to the last detail, it is uncertain to what degree the Klamath will recover; climate change and the continuing diversion of water from some tributaries will almost certainly limit salmon's comeback. It's also an open question whether the basin's improvable and still-incomplete success can be duplicated in other resource disputes, as environmental groups hope.

In the end, what propelled the Klamath's stakeholders through endless meetings and setbacks was a shared devotion to the land that is not always a feature of such disputes. "The depth of energy in the fight was an expression of love of place manifested as enmity," says James Honey, program officer for Portland-based nonprofit Sustainable Northwest, which facilitates stakeholder reconciliation in the basin. "Now that love of place has been flipped over to a better end."

Printed with permission of *Earth Island Journal* ([www.earthisland.org](http://www.earthisland.org)). Jacques Leslie's book, *Deep Water: The Epic Struggle Over Dams, Displaced People and the Environment*, won the J. Anthony Lukas Work-in-Progress Award for its "elegant, beautiful prose."





Photos Courtesy of Ecological Internet

Precious hardwood logs are tied together with lianas and floated down rivers on rafts made from lighter species of trees. Five to six lighter logs are needed to float each rosewood log, exacerbating the impact of rosewood extraction.

## Protests Halt Drilling Auction Near Monongahela National Forest

By Paul J. Nyden  
 Center for Biological Diversity email  
 Charleston Gazette, March 20, 2010

CHARLESTON, West Virginia — Conservation groups succeeded Friday in stopping the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) from auctioning publicly-owned oil and gas reserves under the Monongahela National Forest near Spruce Knob. The Center for Biological Diversity, Wilderness Society and Friends of Blackwater were among the groups warning that oil and gas development would threaten endangered bats, a native brook trout fishery, clean water and scenic resources inside the forest.

The BLM had planned to auction those reserves as part of a broader sale including land and resources in Ohio, Alabama, Arkansas and other states. Mollie Matteson, of the Center for Biological Diversity, said, "Endangered bats are dying of white-nose syndrome a few miles from these drill sites, yet the Forest Service wants to put toxic drill pits in their habitat and potentially disrupt the caves they live in."

Over the last three years, the newly emerging "white-nose syndrome" disease has killed more than 1 million bats in the eastern United States. Last year, the disease was first discovered in West Virginia in a Pendleton County cave that is a major home for rare bats.

Judy Rodd, director of Friends of Blackwater, said, "Once more, the Forest Service put up sites for oil and gas development but failed to do the analysis and consultation that would ensure better protections for our wildlife, clean water and underground cave systems. Once more, we pointed this out in our protest and we won."

Eight other groups filed protests, including: Trout Unlimited, the West Virginia Wilderness Coalition and the National Wildlife Federation.

Oil and gas drilling, particularly drilling that uses "hydrofracking," can contaminate streams, groundwater and wells. Hydrofracking — hydraulic fracturing — creates fractures and fissures in underground rocks, a process enhanced when fluids are injected to extend those fractures. Conservation groups worried that the geology in Pendleton and Randolph counties, which includes many underground fissures and channels, made local water resources particularly vulnerable to pollution problems from hydrofracking.

As energy prices rise, conservationists worry oil and gas drilling may proliferate in national forests without careful review and environmental protections.

## Borneo Natives Win Lawsuit Against Malaysian Oil Palm Giant

Bruno Manser Fund, excerpt  
 Basel, Switzerland, April 1, 2010

MIRI, SARAWAK, Malaysia — More than twelve years after going to court, the Kayan native community of Long Teran Kanan on the Tinjar river in the Malaysian part of Borneo has won an important legal battle against the Sarawak state government and IOI Pelita, a subsidiary of the controversial Malaysian oil palm producer IOI.

In a judgement delivered earlier this week, the Miri High Court declared the land leases used by IOI "null and void" as they had been issued by the Sarawak state government in an illegal and unconstitutional way. According to the Borneo Resources Institute Malaysia, the court granted Long Teran Kanan headman Lah Anyie and his community compensation for the damage done by IOI to their land. The case had been handled by Miri-based lawyer Harrison Ngau.

Last December, a BBC News investigation had uncovered that vast tracts of former rainforest were being bulldozed in the disputed IOI operations area and had found "a scene of absolute devastation: a vast scar on the landscape." Local landowners had complained that their paddy fields and fruit trees had been destroyed by the company.

The Court decision also discredits the so-called Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil which, according to IOI, had found in a probe that the company "had acted responsibly for the management of land in Sarawak..."

# VICTORY! Madagascar Reinstates Rainforest Protections Following Global Internet Action

**Note from Editor:** When we lived in Maryland about 15 years ago, I worked closely with Howard County high school students. We worked as hard as we could to help save rainforests. One of the things the students achieved was convincing the Howard County commissioners to pass an ordinance forbidding the use of several precious rainforest woods, including rosewood.

By Glen Barry  
 Ecological Internet  
 March 29, 2010  
 From Earth's Newsdesk  
<http://www.ecoearth.info/newsdesk>.

Madagascar's transitional government last week reinstated a ban on rosewood logging and exports following prolonged and growing pressure over illegal logging of its national parks spearheaded by Ecological Internet (EI). As reported by Mongabay, the decree (No. 2010-141) prohibits all exports of rosewood and

precious timber for two to five years.

With the export ban in place, the fate of 10,000-15,000 metric tons of already illegally logged rosewood awaiting export remains uncertain. It is also unclear whether illegal loggers and traders will be prosecuted<sup>1</sup>.

"These issues, getting this moratorium to be permanent and working to demonstrate community development from standing primary and restored rainforests will require continued vigilance and campaigning. Yet, two important points have been made. It is again demonstrated that it is possible to end rainforest logging. And the emergence of an empowered global movement committed to protecting and restoring old forest — and other ecologically-sufficient policies necessary to achieve global ecological sustainability — is again powerfully demonstrated," says Dr. Glen Barry, Ecological Internet (EI) President.

Over the past year, Ecological Internet conceived and led an inter-

national protest campaign seeking to emphasize the importance of keeping Madagascar's dwindling primary forests standing and intact as the basis for national advancement<sup>2</sup>.

Some 7,674 EI network participants from 102 countries sent over 1/2 million protest emails. [Ed.: *OE worked on this.*] The result comes just days after EI blasted President Sarkozy of France, a country with deep historical ties to Madagascar, as being "guilty of dangerous hypocrisy" for condemning deforestation as a French company continued to threaten Madagascar's rainforests.

Other groups such as Regenwald, Global Witness and the Environmental Investigation Agency that have been protesting the resumption in exports of illegally logged timber cautiously welcomed the move as well.

The logging crisis began in March of 2009 when destabilization following a government coup allowed loggers to enter several of Madagascar's

world-renowned parks and illegally log rosewood and other valuable trees. Tens of thousands of hectares were logged in Madagascar's most biodiverse rainforests, which also sparked a rise in bushmeat trafficking of lemurs.

Madagascar's transitional government then sanctioned timber exports at the end of 2009 despite a long-standing ban on rosewood logging.

<sup>1</sup>Madagascar bans rainforest timber exports following global outcry, [http://news.monogabay.com/2010/0325-madagascar\\_rosewood\\_ban.html](http://news.monogabay.com/2010/0325-madagascar_rosewood_ban.html). More Information can be found at Mongabay which has broken and continues to cover the story.

<sup>2</sup> Action Alert: Protest Madagascar's Legalization of Rosewood Log Export from National Parks [http://www.rainforestportal.org/shared/alerts/send.aspx?id=madagascar\\_landgrab](http://www.rainforestportal.org/shared/alerts/send.aspx?id=madagascar_landgrab).

# UN: Global Deforestation Slows, Forests Still Lost at 'Alarming Rate'

Submitted by Bill Boteler with this note: *I thought this would be especially interesting to you. I wish I were out there fighting it every day.*

By Richard Black, excerpt  
 BBC News, March 25, 2010

The world's net rate of forest loss has slowed markedly in the last decade with less logging in the Amazon and China planting trees on a grand scale. Yet forests continue to be lost at "an alarming rate" in some countries, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

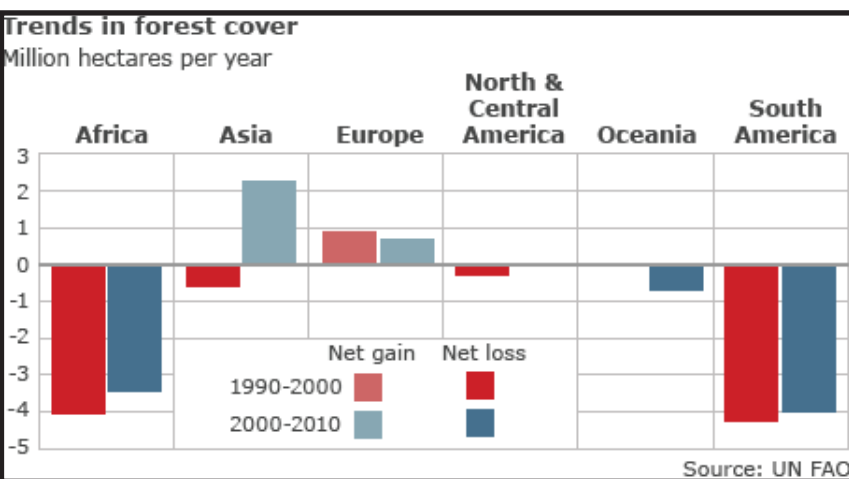
Its Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 finds the loss of tree cover is most acute in Africa and South America. But Australia also suffered huge losses because of the recent drought.

"It is good news," said the report's co-ordinator Mette Loyche Wilkie, a senior forestry officer with FAO.

"This is the first time we've been able to say that the deforestation rate is going down across the world and certainly when you look at the net rate that is certainly down."

"But the situation in some countries is still alarming," she told BBC News.

The last decade saw forests being lost or converted at a rate of 13 million hectares (32 million acres) per



year, compared to 16 million hectares (40 million acres) in the 1990s.

However, new forests were being planted to the tune of more than seven million hectares (17.3 million acres) per year; so the net rate of loss since the year 2000 has been 5.2 million hectares (12.8 million acres) per year, compared to 8.3 million (20.5 million acres) in the 1990s.

Globally, forests now cover about 31% of the Earth's land surface. The biggest change has been in Asia which now reports a net forest growth

The biggest losses of forest occurred in Brazil, Indonesia and Australia.

Australia's reduction of half a mil-

lion hectares (over a million acres) per year is principally due to the drought conditions that have covered most of the country in recent years, thought to be a consequence of global climate change. The Indonesian and Brazilian figures were not such a surprise, with both countries possessing vast tracts of forest and major logging industries, and deforestation is slowing.

"Both Brazil and Indonesia are reporting a significant drop in the loss of forests," said Dr. Loyche Wilkie.

"In Brazil it's spectacular and that's largely because there is a political goal to reduce deforestation by 80% by 2020 and that's supported by the president."

As deforestation has fallen, there has also been an increase in the planting of new forests, particularly in China, leading to a net increase in national forest cover of three million hectares (7 million acres) per year.

But the program — aimed at preventing desertification, reducing flooding and protecting farmland — is due to end in 2020 and, if it does, the FAO points out, that will rapidly lead to an increase in the net loss of forest figure.

India and Vietnam have also mounted significant forest-planting programs, the FAO notes.

UN agencies hope the net rate of loss will be slowed further in coming years if the climate change-related initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) comes to fruition.

### Diverse Roots

The Global Forest Resources Assessment is principally based on data submitted by governments.

Details also include how forests are regulated and how they are used; and here, there are also some encouraging trends, according to Eduardo Rojas, assistant director-general of FAO's forestry department. "Not only have countries improved their forest policies and legislation, they have also allocated forests for use by local communities..."

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## Small-City Mayor Takes on Pentagon

### War Spending Should Be Spent on Americans, Not on Killing Afghans

By Jo Comerford, excerpt  
Tomdispatch.com, April 12, 2010

Matt Ryan, the mayor of Binghamton, New York, is sick and tired of watching people in local communities "squabble over crumbs," as he puts it, while so much local money pours into the Pentagon's coffers and into America's wars. He's so sick and tired of it, in fact, that, urged on by local residents, he's decided to do something about it. He's planning to be the first mayor in the United States to decorate the façade of City Hall with a large, digital "cost of war" counter, funded entirely by private contributions.

That counter will offer a constantly changing estimate of the total price Binghamton's taxpayers have been paying for our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since October 2001. By September 30, 2010, the city's "war tax" will reach \$138.6 million — or even more if, as expected, Congress passes an Obama administration request for supplemental funds to cover the president's "surge" in Afghanistan. Mayor Ryan wants, he says, to put the counter "where everyone can see it, so that my constituents are urged to have a much-needed conversation."

In doing so, he's joining a growing chorus of mayors, including Chicago's Richard Daley and Boston's Thomas Menino, who are ever more insistently drawing attention to what Ryan calls the country's "skewed national priorities," especially the local impact of military and war spending. With more than three years left in his current term, Ryan has decided to pull out all the stops to reach his neighbors and constituents, all 47,000 of them, especially the near quarter of the city's inhabitants who currently live below the poverty line and the 9% who are officially unemployed.

#### A Hard Hit Rust-Belt City

Like so many post-industrial rust-belt communities, Binghamton was hard hit by the financial meltdown of 2008 and the Great Recession that followed, though it fared better than a number of similar cities, in part because Ryan, his administration and the Binghamton City Council are a smart and scrappy crew. No doubt that's why he earned the New York State Conference of Mayors' Public Administration and Management award two years running.

These days, however, even the smartest and scrappiest of mayors still has to face grim reality. In July 2009, as the city began developing the 2010 budget, Ryan projected a \$7 million shortfall. Contributing factors included a likely \$700,000 decline in sales tax revenue, ever rising healthcare costs, increased pension contributions to replace funds lost in the market during the collapse of 2008-09 and a \$500,000 drop in the return on the city's investment portfolio.

With worse times ahead, thanks in part to the projected end of federal stimulus money and a city drained dry of reserves, Ryan has had to face a classically unpalatable choice: raise city sales taxes from 7% to an unheard of 24% or cut city jobs. He chose jobs, as have the vast majority of mayors and governors across the country, eliminating 39 of them.

In the process, he sought

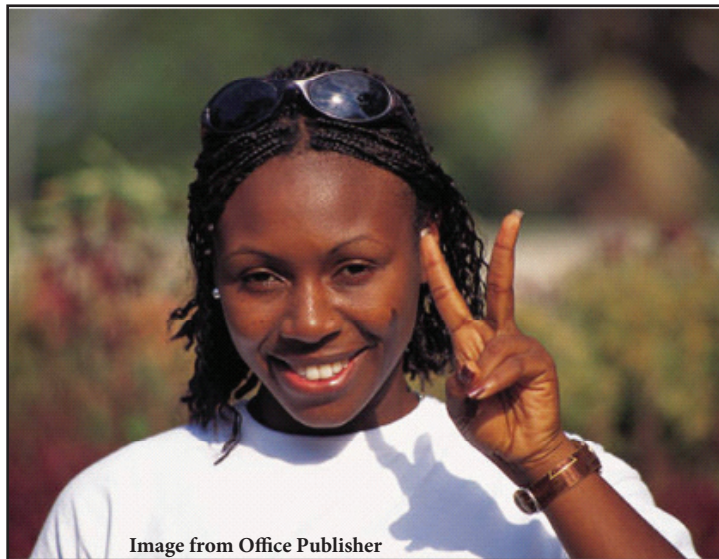


Image from Office Publisher

greater program efficiencies and wrestled with ways to increase city revenues while cutting ever closer to Binghamton's proverbial bone.

It was in the context of this kind of local pain that Ryan was stunned to discover just how much of Binghamton's taxes were going to the military and to our distant wars and how little was coming back to Binghamton in the form of aid and services.

"When I first saw the cost of war numbers and made the connections," Ryan remarks, "I had to wonder if we're ever going to get our priorities straight as a nation. It's like we're facing an attack on government. As a mayor, I can see so clearly what increased federal spending could do for the people of my city."

Ryan's message doesn't resonate with all of his constituents — some have walked out on his public appearances — but he's used to controversy and convinced that Americans had better get their heads straight soon. "People are hurting so bad," he insists, "that, like it or not, we're all going to have to look at things seriously if we want our situation to change."

Heads should swivel, he thinks, when faced with the \$138.6 million Binghamton's taxpayers are out of pocket since 2001 for the Iraq and Afghan wars. And that's not even counting the city's share of the supplemental funds Congress will undoubtedly agree to this spring to cover the Afghan "surge" or the city's portion of the basic Pentagon budget for the same period.

For a small city with an annual budget of \$81.1 million, \$138.6 million would be a hefty sum, even in non-recessionary times. For the same amount of money, Ryan could fund the Binghamton city library for the next 60 years or pay for a four-year education for 95% of the incoming freshman class at the State University of New York at Binghamton or offer four years of quality health coverage for everyone in Binghamton 19 or younger or secure renewable electricity for every home in the city for the next 11 years. If he was feeling really flush, he could fully fund one-third of New York State's Head Start slots for one year.

For the same sum, Ryan could also authorize a \$2,900 tax refund for every woman, man and child in Binghamton or pay the salaries of all of Binghamton's hard-hit public school teachers and staff for about two years.

For \$138.6 million, Mayor Ryan could hire 2,765 public safety officers for a year, or simply refund the 12 police positions cut in the latest budget contraction and guarantee those salaries for the next 230 years.

Ridiculous? These days, no one is laughing in Binghamton or other cities like it.

#### A Community Starved by War

As tax day loomed on April 15<sup>th</sup>, Ryan increasingly thought

about where Binghamton's tax dollars would be heading and dreamed about a government system that would have the potential to raise and spend tax revenue in the service of social benefits like affordable healthcare.

He's disturbed by how Binghamton's tax dollars will be distributed and what they will — and won't — buy for his city.

Consider, for instance, where the 2009 taxes paid by a median-income Binghamton household actually went. That year, such a household's income hovered around \$30,000 annually, while its members paid approximately \$738 in federal income taxes.

According to the tax-day analysis of the National Priorities Project (NPP), an overwhelming 218 of those dollars went to pay for military expenditures and interest on military-related debt (generated, in part, by current war spending). The next highest amount — \$137 — went to healthcare, including Medicare, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

In 2009, \$67 (nearly 10 cents on every tax dollar) went to an aggregated category of spending NPP has titled "government," tripling it in a single year, largely thanks to the Troubled Asset Relief Program, otherwise known as the bank bailout, whose cost every community in America has had to shoulder. Fifty-eight dollars (8.5 cents on every income-tax dollar) went to increased unemployment insurance payments and job-training initiatives, also a rise from the previous year.

Not surprisingly, the \$15 that went to elementary, secondary, higher and vocational education in 2009 represented a drop from 2008, a loss of a penny on every tax dollar. There's no way, of course, that Mayor Ryan's dream of free, quality education from kindergarten to college is likely to happen on 2% of every individual federal income tax dollar. Nor will we usher in the green technological revolution that he and President Obama both support by spending 2.5 cents on every dollar for the combined categories of the environment, energy and science and another 1.3 cents of every dollar on transportation.

"It's a double whammy," Ryan says. "We have a revenue problem and a values and priorities problem in this nation."

Some desperate city leaders have suggested that the Mayor cut workers' pensions to help close the city's budget gap. Matt Ryan doesn't see that as a solution to anything. "I have secretaries making \$25,000 or \$30,000. I'm not about to cut their net, such as it is. We have to think long haul. We have to look at fundamental changes if we're going to make it as a country."

"We should all be talking about this — all the time."

A construction crew was to install Binghamton's "cost of war" counter which will overlook the city's busiest intersection . . .

### The Awakening

Iona,

"The Awakening" series is always remarkable, and the column in last April's issue was especially so. Most High burns 50 gallons of gasoline in a year? I've had some days when I burn that much before breakfast! I admire his dedication and vision. If everyone were to do one-tenth of what he recommends, we'd have a much cleaner world.

Mark Lautman  
Rockville MD

### Gas Drilling

Dear Editor,

I find it hard to believe, the wildest imagination wouldn't have predicted, that humans would actually continue to destroy their own environment and promote this destruction for personal gain, after the people in charge of figuring out what is going on...that would be the scientists....point out that it is happening.

That's where I come from on this issue. Same with universal health care, the one Kathie and I have chosen to work on. I feel like standing on top of a mountain and screaming: "COME ON, HUMANS, WAKE UP"

Don't be terrified, we exist at the pleasure of the planet and do what we can to defend it. Lot's is going wrong, but we aren't responsible for it all, only the tiny bit under our control, which we minimize. We who aware of what is happening do what we can.

Thanks for keeping *The Order of the Earth* publishing.

Jack Hendricks  
McConnellsburg PA

### Chemtrails

Hi Iona,

The chemtrails here in north-east Ohio are horrible. Half the sky is overcast even though it's supposed to be completely sunny! It has been the same for three days now. It's so discouraging to look up and see the sky filled with artificial clouds blocking out the sun.

When is this going to stop? Have you heard if they're planning on a more intensive campaign to spray us?

Well, they've started here, that's for sure.  
Doug, Ohio

### Crazies

Dear Iona,

Here in Korea many people are under the weather. The temperatures in daytime are high and it is very low in night. We had snow in the middle of April. It is very unusual in Korea.

We watched a movie "Crazies." Nowadays many things go crazy. Earthquake, volcano and flooding cost a lot of lives and destroyed houses and farmlands.

We are like walking on land mines. That is the reason why we need good spiritual guidance. Many people are lost in the jungle of chaos. Many people are under water financially and they are desperate to get out of the trouble. If they could not, they could go crazy. The world is getting dangerous, I think.

We need wise wisdom and good philosophy. I hope the OE could be a good lighthouse guiding the lost ships in the ocean in dark.

This is my small thought.

Pyeong Roh, Korea

### Environmental Ed

Hi Iona,

We are celebrating a big victory in environmental education. President Obama is including environmental education in

his "Blueprint for Reform." This is an exciting moment for us!!!

See [www.nclicoalition.org](http://www.nclicoalition.org) and read Obama's "Blueprint for Reform" includes environmental education and "Key Pieces of Legislation."

Our conference went very well until about 5:00 Saturday when the electricity went out and remained out until 2:00 AM. We had omelets instead of the banquet, did the award presentation by candlelight and our author/photographer could not do his whole visual presentation. But Dudley Edmondson has agreed to return next year and we will have an emphasis on serving the underserved.

About serving the underserved — this is a key and important message in environmental education right now. There are many children (and adults also for that matter) who have no connection to the outdoors. To them it is a foreign and frightening place.

In his book, [Black and Brown Faces in America's Wild Places](#), Dudley Edmondson uses his talent as a photographer to photograph people of color working in the environmental field and includes their message. In this way he is attempting to use these people as models for others.

We are going to take advantage of the fact that he is returning to give his presentation that got cancelled this year and are emphasizing this message at the conference. We will have a strand of workshops on urban teaching and attempt to get more of Pittsburgh's teachers to the conference.

I have an extra book. I will stick it in the mail for you.

Glad you enjoyed your trip.

Ruth Roperti

President, PA Environmental Educators Assoc., [www.paee.net](http://www.paee.net)

### Klamath River

Thanks Iona,

It was really good to see Hal Zack on the front page of OE — such a wonderful, kind man! :-)

Wasn't sure where Louise Bowman gleaned the Klamath River history from since many elements were missing\* ... the story is really much, much deeper, involving federal land grabs of farms and lots of dead wildlife when they cut off the irrigation water.

You see, the Klamath River is part of the Columbia River basin and with man's intervention with the dams and resulting Columbia Basin irrigation project, desert became fertile ground and wildlife multiplied with the new lush vegetation growing as a result.

The fish listed on the endangered species list that was threatened was the "sucker fish" ... which was the excuse to shut down irrigation in 2001. After the issue went through the courts, in 2004 (I am pretty sure...) the courts ruled that the shut down of the irrigation was not justified and the sucker fish was not as endangered as previously thought. By that time, farmers had sold their land to the feds for pennies and the rest is history.

Following is a list of articles we (*The Idaho Observer*, I.O.) did on the issue. You may want to read a few of them to get the "bigger picture."

Yes, there is always a problem when man intervenes. Our biggest environmental threats now are GMO (genetically modified organisms), chemtrails (fallout), nuclear power and weaponry, Dupont (chemicals), Monsanto (control of all life and water), nanotechnology, radiation of the entire planet (celltowers, HAARP), etc. BTW, oil from the earth is the earth's bloodstream — and is not from "fossils" — that has been disproven....

P.S. Several of us are working on alternative technologies to our oil dependence. I will try to funnel you printable material as it becomes available.

1. *Idaho Observer*: Klamath Falls sees direct action on Independence Day: On Monday evening, the headgate was opened again delivering water to the area's some 1400 farms and ... KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. — The headgates are open again. ... [proliberty.com/observer/20010715.htm](http://proliberty.com/observer/20010715.htm) - Cached

2. *Idaho Observer*: Klamath Falls: In the COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION: If the feds are able to have such total control of Klamath Basin water that they can destroy the lives of thousands of people then there is no reason to ... [www.proliberty.com/observer/20010814.htm](http://www.proliberty.com/observer/20010814.htm)

3. *Idaho Observer*: Morris Dees' SPLC only targets certain colors of hate: Conflict in Klamath: The SPLC believes that, "The short-lived battle of Klamath Falls was the latest flashpoint in a continuing low-intensity war ... The water will flow next year. This is not right-wing extremism — this is survival. ... [proliberty.com/observer/20020114.htm](http://proliberty.com/observer/20020114.htm) - Cached

4. Genetically modified trees: an attempt to obliterate all life ... explosively flammable, and insatiably thirsty for ground water. ... cut down in one test plot at OSU's Agricultural Experiment Station in Klamath Falls. ... [proliberty.com/observer/20100220.html](http://proliberty.com/observer/20100220.html) - Cached

5. Previous Editions: FAN one step closer to removing fluoride from public water supplies ..... --*The Idaho Observer* • Klamath Falls: In the COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION ... [proliberty.com/observer/years.htm](http://proliberty.com/observer/years.htm) - Cached - Similar

6. *Idaho Observer*: Quotes on Klamath: The force in this case is a small dam on the north end of Klamath Falls, Oregon holding up 6 inches of water, or 10 percent of the water supply from two ... [proliberty.com/observer/20010815.htm](http://proliberty.com/observer/20010815.htm)

7. *Idaho Observer*: Is the green pasture of the American dream turning ... KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. -- The federal government shut off farmers and ranchers' access to irrigation water this last spring in an effort to preserve the ... [proliberty.com/observer/20010813.htm](http://proliberty.com/observer/20010813.htm)

8. *Idaho Observer*: Congress not likely to authorize aid for Klamath ... KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. -- Oregon senators Ron Wyden (D) and Gordon Smith (R) have — water to some 400000 acres in southern Oregon and northern California. ... [proliberty.com/observer/20011027.htm](http://proliberty.com/observer/20011027.htm)

Really just wanted you to know the "rest of the story." We live out here and it was not pretty what the feds and state did to the wildlife and farmers. The GMO issue out here is also quite frightening, as it is in South America, Mexico and India — and now Iraq.

We are focusing on the greenhouse that Don had framed last Spring and preparing for spring planting. It is still freezing at night out here. I have a page in the April I.O. about soil amendments to counter the chemtrails, GMO, and non-fertile soil.

Hope you are growing a garden this year, Iona, as well as everyone in your neighborhood!

God Bless you in your work. You are doing a great job, truly. Creating dialogue on environmental issues is more important now than ever.

Ingri Cassel, Idaho  
Publisher *Idaho Observer*

\*Ed.: Louise gave OE the subscription to *Earth Island Journal* and they let us reprint the article.

# Winning Battles, Losing the War on Invasive Species

Continued from page 11

and reaching plague proportions. They have also been implicated in the extinction of indigenous species in ecosystems they have invaded and colonized.

- **The coypu or nutria, *Myocastor coypus***, is a large semi-aquatic rodent that originated from South America. Due to escapes and releases from fur farms there are now large feral populations in North America, Europe and Asia. Their burrows penetrate

and damage river banks, dykes and irrigation facilities. Feeding methods lead to the destruction of large areas of reed swamp. Habitat loss caused by *coypus* impacts plant, insect, bird and fish species.

- **A native of the Indian sub-continent, the ship rat, *Rattus rattus***, has now spread throughout the world. It is widespread in forest and woodlands as well as being able to live in and around buildings. It will feed on and damage almost any edible

thing. The ship rat is most frequently identified with catastrophic declines of birds on islands. It is very agile and often frequents tree tops searching for food and nesting there in bunches of leaves and twigs.

- **Yellow Himalayan raspberry, *Rubus ellipticus***, a thorny shrub that originates from southern Asia has been introduced to several places, including Hawaii, Southern U.S.A. and the UK, and is grown in cultivation for its edible fruits. This plant has

become a major pest in Hawaii, threatening its own native species of raspberry, *Rubus hawaiiensis* and the ability of this plant to thrive in diverse habitat types makes it a particularly threatening invasive plant.

Most countries have made international commitments to tackle the threat of invasive species but only half have introduced legislation to control invasives and even fewer countries are taking adequate action on the ground.

"It's likely to be more cost

effective to prevent the spread of invasive species in the first place than to tackle the biodiversity crisis once they have become established," says Dr. Bill Jackson, chairman of GISP and deputy director general of the IUCN, which is a GISP partner organization.

"With sufficient funds and political will, invasive species can be controlled or eradicated," said Jackson. "This will allow native species to be saved from extinction but countries need to dramatically improve the way they deal with the problem."

"While some threatened species on the IUCN Red List have improved in status as a result of successful control or eradication of invasive alien species, a growing number are more threatened owing to increasing spread and threats from non-indigenous species," says Dr. Stuart Butchart from BirdLife International.

"This shows that although we are winning some battles in the fight against invasive species, current evidence suggests that we are losing the war...."



## Grassroots Power

# Japan Charges Sea Shepherd Captain With Five Crimes

TOKYO, Japan, April 12, 2010 (ENS) — A New Zealand anti-whaling activist who boarded a Japanese whaling vessel in the Southern Ocean has been charged with five crimes, including trespassing, carrying a weapon and causing injury.

Pete Bethune, of the U.S.-based Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, boarded the Shonan Maru No. 2 February 15, intending to make a citizen's arrest of its captain who rammed and sank Bethune's vessel, the *Ady Gil* (photo), in January.

He was taken into custody, then was arrested and charged earlier this month after the ship returned to Japan.

Bethune has been charged with vandalism, carrying a weapon, injuring a crewman and obstruction of passage of a vessel. He had earlier been charged with trespassing on the Japanese ship after boarding the vessel from a jet ski. If found guilty, Bethune could be imprisoned for up to 15 years.

The incident occurred as Sea Shepherd activists attempted for the sixth year in a row to halt Japan's annual whale hunt in Antarctic waters.

On January 6<sup>th</sup> Captain Bethune was at the helm of the Sea Shepherd's ship, the futuristic catamaran *Ady Gil*, when the catamaran was run over, cut in two and sunk by the much larger *Shonan Maru No. 2*. The destruction of the *Ady Gil* endangered the lives of her six international volunteer crewmembers.

Captain Bethune's response was to board the *Shonan Maru No. 2* so he could confront the captain responsible for the destruction of the *Ady Gil*.

Sea Shepherd founder Captain Paul Watson says the charges are "bogus" and calls Bethune a "prisoner of war." "The very fact that the captain of the Japanese ship has not been questioned for the destruction of the Sea Shepherd vessel denies any civilian description of the *Shonan Maru No. 2*," said Watson. "A civilian vessel would have been investigated and the captain questioned and charged for a felony offense. Even if the collision were an accident, the captain would have been questioned."

"Only military officers are immune to questioning by civilian authorities and that is the case with this incident," Watson said.

"Where are the charges against the captain of the *Shonan Maru No. 2* for violently attacking the Sea Shepherd vessel *Ady Gil*?" asks Watson.

Captain Chuck Swift was commanding the Sea Shepherd ship *Bob Barker* and rescued the *Ady Gil* crew from the water after the attack in January.

"I watched the *Shonan Maru No. 2* intentionally travel into and run over the *Ady Gil* and thought my crew and I were going to be recovering injured and/or murdered crew," said Swift. "It is astounding that Japan is prosecuting Captain Bethune while ignoring the many crimes of its own illegal whaling fleet — and shameful that the



Photo Courtesy Sea Shepherd  
The Sea Shepherd vessel *Ady Gil* was sunk by Japanese whalers.

world is allowing it to do so unchallenged."

The crew of the *Shonan Maru No. 2* said the activists had tried to snare their propeller with a rope and had thrown butyric acid at the ship, giving a "chemical burn" to one sailor.

Sea Shepherd denies that Bethune caused injury and said the substance thrown was rancid butter that smells bad but cannot cause injury.

Watson says the Australian authorities should have investigated the incident because it took place in the waters of the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Only New Zealand Maritime Authorities have attempted to question the captain of the *Shonan Maru No. 2*, Watson said but, because Japan is not cooperating, New Zealand authorities cannot proceed.

Watson describes Captain Bethune's boarding of the *Shonan Maru No. 2*, saying, "He boarded a ship moving through frigid Antarctic waters at fifteen knots in the dark of night. He jumped from a jet ski to the harpoon vessel, slipped and fell into the sea, was picked up and attempted the boarding a second time, past sharp anti-boarding spikes and netting. He remained on the ship for nearly two hours until sunrise when he calmly knocked on the door of the wheelhouse and presented himself to the captain who sank his ship."

Watson says the assault charge is based on an incident that was filmed by professional cameras and "clearly shows the whalers firing pepper spray into the wind and back into their own faces."

"He has been charged with obstructing business despite the fact that the business he was obstructing is illegal under international conservation law and despite the fact that the whaling is supposed to be for research and not a business," says Watson.

"He is being charged with damage to property for cutting a hole in a net to board the ship that destroyed our vessel valued at U.S. \$3 million, Watson said.

Watson points out that Bethune is charged under an obscure law called



Captain Pete Bethune  
Photo by JoAnne McArthur  
Courtesy Sea Shepherd

the Sword Control Law, the same law that Emperor Meiji introduced in 1865 to confiscate the swords from the samurai. The knife that Bethune used to cut the net to board the ship is being categorized as a sword.

A lawyer on Bethune's defense team says the charges laid against him by Japan are "ridiculous."

"Some of them we don't even really know what the factual basis is," said Seattle attorney Dan Harris.

Harris said the Japanese legal system has been tainted by politics and appears to have given in to the whalers.

Watson says the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society will help provide Bethune with the best legal defense possible and stand by his family while he is a prisoner.

"What we will not do is retreat or surrender to the outlaw whalers," Watson said.

"We are presently rallying our resources, raising funds and preparing to return to the Southern Ocean next December," said Watson. "I already have a dozen volunteers willing to board Japanese whaling ships next season, willing to be taken prisoner and willing to sacrifice their freedom and risk their lives for the whales."



Photo by Gerard Til, Courtesy Greenpeace  
Greenpeace activists attach themselves to the mooring ropes of the NYK ORION in Rotterdam.

## Greenpeace Blocks Whale Meat Shipment in the Netherlands

ROTTERDAM, The Netherlands, April 2, 2010 (ENS) — After Greenpeace chained themselves to the mooring ropes of a container ship carrying whale meat early this morning, Rotterdam port police promised that the whale meat shipment en route to Japan from Iceland will remain at the port.

The owners of the container ship NYK ORION decided to offload seven containers of meat from endangered fin whales rather than carry on with trade in an endangered species.

"Today Greenpeace was able just in time to prevent this shipment of whale meat from continuing; such action should no longer be necessary," said Greenpeace oceans campaigner Pavel Klinckhamers.

"The Dutch authorities must ensure that whale meat never again comes to the Rotterdam harbor," he said. "They must work to end the whale meat trade."

Early this morning, 15 Greenpeace activists chained themselves to the mooring ropes of the NYK ORION to prevent the container ship from leaving port.

Greenpeace's actions against the shipment combined with the support of workers at the Rotterdam port resulted in the containers being removed from the vessel.

The 15 activists unchained themselves after the whale meat at issue was unloaded. Seven Greenpeace activists were arrested as a result of today's protest and are expected to be released shortly.

The container ship NYK ORION is owned by the Japanese company Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha based in Tokyo. The NYK Group is a comprehensive logistics and transportation provider with services by ocean, land and air.

The NYK Group had no immediate comment on the incident. In general, the company takes a pro-active position on environmental conservation saying it is implementing three medium-term strategies aimed at realizing "a green and beautiful Earth" and passing on "a peaceful society to future generations."

The company said it is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote activities to conserve the global

environment and strengthen group environmental management. No company policy on whaling or the transport of whale meat is stated.

Japan is the world's most active whaling nation and the government promotes the consumption of whale meat to the Japanese people.

The fin whale can grow to 27 meters (88 1/2 feet) in length and is the second largest whale alive, after the blue whale.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species classes this whale species as Endangered and gives a rough total estimate of about 53,000 fin whales in the North Atlantic ocean in the year 2000.

International trade in fin whales and other whales is banned under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, CITES. The Netherlands is one of the 175 signatories to this treaty.

Japan and Iceland refuse to comply with the CITES ban and continue to trade in whale meat.

The head office of Greenpeace International is based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands and today's action was aimed not only at the Japanese shipping company but also at the Dutch government.

"The Netherlands has to be clear about its position," said Klinckhamers. Does it want to have a hand in the transit of illicit whale meat?"

"We want to send a clear message," he said. "If the Netherlands is involved in whale trade, it is jointly responsible for the unacceptable downfall of this endangered species."

At the annual International Whaling Commission meeting in Morocco in June, member governments are expected to vote on lifting the moratorium on commercial whaling that has been in place since 1986.

Supporters of the return to commercial whaling, such as Japan, say it would reduce the number of whales being hunted. But continuation of the ban is supported by many governments, including the United States, the European Union and Australia, as well as Greenpeace and other environmental groups.

A pessimist makes difficulties of one's opportunities and an optimist makes opportunities of one's difficulties.

Winston Churchill

# African Women Dancers Can Fill Granaries

By Ntandoyenkosi Ncube

JOHANNESBURG, March 25, 2010 (IPS) — "Some said, how can women dancers tell us about climate change? Some said, how can dancers talk about planting trees? Others asked, how can women dancers build schools? But now the government says a drum has managed to fill our granaries, a dancer has managed to build schools."

With these words, Kamoto Community Arts director Mary Manzole illuminated how a Zambian women's dance group used theater for development to encourage villagers to plant more than 5,000 trees and erect three classroom blocks in three years in Zambia's Southern Province.

Manzole was speaking during the Celebrating SADC (South African Development Community) Women in Theatre and Dance Festival held in Johannesburg earlier in March.

Organized by the Southern Africa Theatre Initiatives (SATI), the festival sought to highlight the role played by female artists in SADC in uniting and transforming the region.

"Women artists are neglected despite the great work they are

doing to unite and develop our communities. What they need is to be recognized and be supported only," SATI secretary Mpo Molepo told IPS. "They must be given same opportunity as their male counterparts." Manzole said her group spends time in the community doing "baseline research" to identify issues affecting them, then the group writes and performs plays to raise awareness of the issues.

In 2002, Kamoto Community Arts identified deforestation as a serious problem in Zambia's Southern Province and ramshackle classrooms as affecting students at Chiyumu Basic School.

"With climate change, there was a lot of deforestation taking place and we used theatre to encourage people to plant trees. After our play, they started planting trees and this changed the rainfall pattern in the whole province.

"This changed the entire farming trend in this province that for years used to buy maize from other provinces and is now a seller," explained group member, Jean Shamende.

"Through our play we raised money for the construction of

three classroom blocks at Chiyumu Basic School that we later handed over to the government," Manzole told IPS.

Ghetto Artists, a group of young women from Botswana, presented one of their plays, "Strength of A Woman" during the festival. The play portrays the tragic and true-life abuses experienced by the young women.

"We are seeing the positive impact of this play [in Botswana]; abused girls are coming up disclosing, some are seeking counseling and parents and men are confessing. Young girls and boys are going back to school through this play," said play director, Saone Bokitshane.

She added: "Art is very powerful. Through art, you can heal



Photo by Ntandoyenkosi Ncube/IPS  
Ghetto Artists director Saone Bokitshane performing at the Celebrating South African Development Community's Women in Theatre and Dance Festival.

people and through art you can educate the whole community and reconstruct the country. It is high time that our governments

fund female artists to produce plays on HIV/AIDS. Through women's plays we can stop the spread of this epidemic."

Members of the public who attended the festival got a chance to watch and discuss several other plays, including *Lumba*, a play from Zambia about a female chieftain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who raised an all-women army against an enemy tribe and who is celebrated as a powerful prophetess.

From Zimbabwe there was 'Ebony and Ivory', about two women and the emotional roller-coaster and trauma caused by war, violence and torture.

They also viewed powerful performances in plays and dance reflecting women's lives from Lesotho and South Africa.

The festival was also an opportunity to highlight issues affecting women artists themselves, including gender disparities in the industry. According to the Artists' Rights Union, barely five percent of directors and producers are women.

The festival was the culmination of research commissioned by SATI in South Africa, Malawi, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mauritius, Swaziland, the Seychelles, Mozambique, Tanzania

and Lesotho. The study by Tanzanian actor and academic, Professor Amandina Lihamba, sought to investigate whether women's voices were being adequately heard in Southern Africa's arts and literature circles.

"Men are better respected in theater. Equality of any kind does not exist for women in the arts industry," said Creative Workers Union of South Africa Gender Coordinator, Nakedi Ribane.

Artists Trust of Southern Africa director Eugene Malotana placed some of the blame on SADC governments. "Our governments are not serious with this sector," she said.

Malotana's sentiments were echoed by Felicia Lumka, a member of the cast of Thursday's Child, a South African play about a young girl who is flung into destitution, abuse, squalor and prostitution when she is abandoned by her lovesick mother.

Lumka questioned why SADC leaders could not give the arts the same sort of attention they give to soccer. She called on SADC governments to commission more work from women artists and for government and business to put more money into filmmaking.